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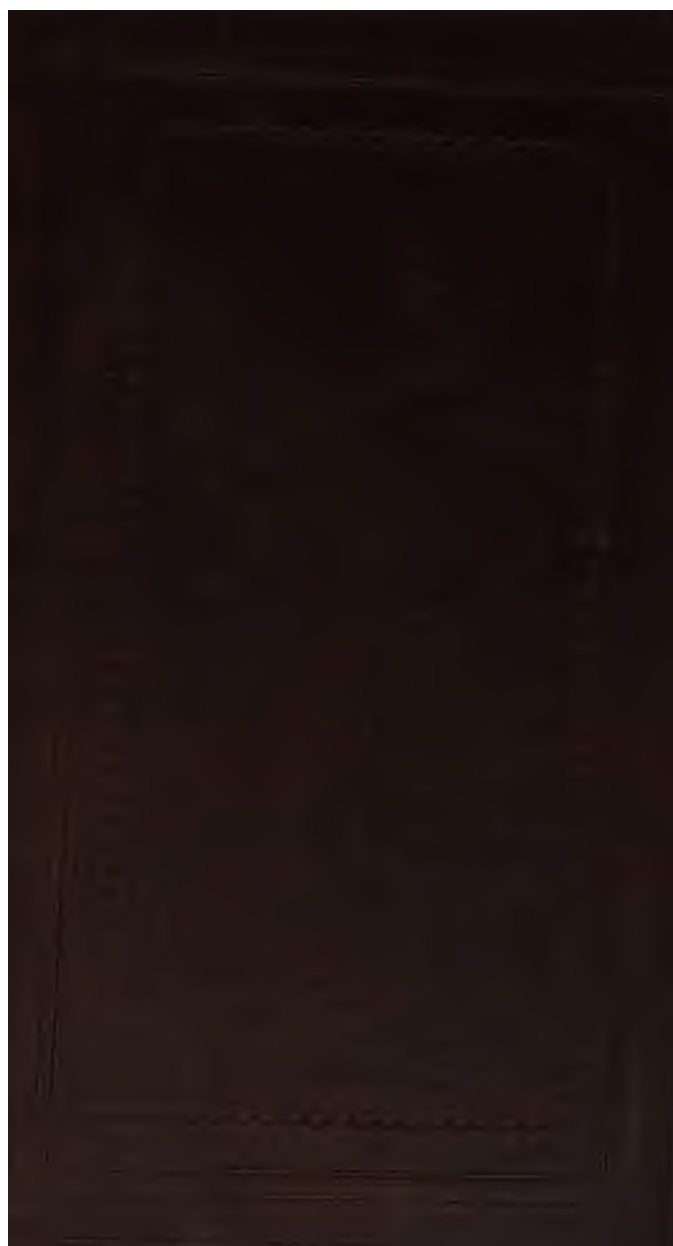
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HISTORICAL AND PRACTICAL SERMONS

ON THE

SUFFERINGS AND RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD.

BY ONE OF THE WRITERS OF THE "TRACTS FOR THE
CHRISTIAN SEASONS."

VOLUME II.

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SERMON I.

THE EVENTS OF GOOD FRIDAY.

Behold the Man!—JOHN xix. 5.

So we reach the end of His day of death. Ere three o'clock on the day of the Passover He had "given up the ghost." Yet the cross stood, and the Body stretched upon it, towards the setting sun, its back to the guilty city, and the hill side of Calvary had sunk to silence under the calm twilight; the multitudes, smiting their breasts, had returned; the priests and troubled council had thronged the Temple for the Feast, satisfied that they had done their worst on Him whom they had just now left at Golgotha. A few solitary figures still lingered near the cross and the cold still Body,—His mother and the beloved disciple, or the two Maries who were to

watch by His sepulchre, or Joseph of Arimathea who approached to bury Him.

But we return to complete our consideration on the acts of His sufferings, where we left them. He had been scourged, and stood before Pilate; He had been crowned with thorns, and invested with the reed for His sceptre, and now Pilate brought Him forth, saying, "Behold the Man!" There is something striking in his frequent repetition of the word *man*, the name in which He delighted, — "the *Son of Man*." Anxious to save Him, he now dropped the title of *King*—"your King,"—and simply said *man*, finding that the name king only irritated them more. "Then came Jesus forth, wearing the purple robe and the crown of thorns," pleaded for by the Gentile, against His own people the Jews.

And now it is remarkable the way in which the people clamoured for His death: "We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God." And so doubtless He ought; that law did throughout proclaim that Jesus must die for the sins of the people, though they did not mean this; when they said so it was but like Caiaphas' speech, said unwillingly and unknowingly, yet forced on them by God. Nor is this uncommon in Scrip-

ture, to find great truths put into the mouths of the wicked : so it is ; the unjust judge shewing the just Judge, God ; the man in bed listening to his friend's importunity, shewing forth God's answer to prayer ; the dishonest steward, the wisdom of His elect. Sinners and saints of God typify the history of Christ.

Now "Pilate was the more afraid." Mysterious fear ! he seems to be so convinced of His innocence, and even of His Divinity, that he dare not kill Him. He again goes back to Him, saying, "Whence art Thou?" but Jesus gave him no answer. This was now the fifth time He gave no answer ; once before the high-priest, the council, and Herod, twice before Pilate. Probably He would not answer except where He saw there was good to be done by the question, or the mind of the questioner in a right state for receiving it.

Pilate said, "Speakest Thou not unto me ? knowest Thou not that I have the power to crucify Thee, and have power to release Thee ? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against Me except it were given thee from above : therefore he that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin." He answered this question because as it was directed against God's character, and it

involved a great truth, that all power came from God. The answer is difficult. It seems to mean, "Your power as judge is given you from God, and as a judge you exert that power which you hold, and, in this particular act, at the urging of others, viz. the Jewish nation; therefore they are even worse than you." The difficulty seems meant to lead us to search more narrowly and deeply into it.

Pilate still more feared to kill Him. Then the Jews threatened to appeal to Cæsar. Pilate dreaded this; he knew the cruel temper of Tiberius, and trembled for himself. It is singular, that a short time afterwards Pilate was removed from his government by Cæsar on account of a complaint made by the Jews.

Then Pilate sat down on the judgment-seat, and now an appeal came to him from his wife. She had had a dream, in which the Romans had great faith that they came from God. So God often worked on people through things they already believed in: at Athens, through the altar to the Unknown God; the Philistines through their own prophets^a; the Chaldean magi through a star; the sick through healing; the multitudes by stories; His disciples by heavenly doctrine; the Scribes and Pharisees by the Old

^a 1 Sam. iv. 2.

Testament, and now a Roman lady through dreams.

It was now six in the morning, and it was three hours before the last ; the time was probably taken up with condemning the two thieves, and the long, painful journey to the cross. At nine He was put on the cross, at twelve He uttered the exceeding bitter cry, and the sun was darkened till three. At three He gave up the ghost. So His day of sorrows began at midnight, as a likeness of our days, which we travel after Him, beginning from midnight, at which still hour we are led to expect He will come again to judge the world.

Then Pilate said, "Behold your King ! will you crucify your King ?" They cried out, "Crucify Him ; we have no king but Cæsar." They saw this was Pilate's weakest point, and so they touched him there. Strangely prophetic ! they had no king but Cæsar from that time forth, for soon a Cæsar came to level their city with the dust ; and ever since the Cæsars of the world have ruled over them with a rod of iron. They would never have God to reign over them. So it was in the wilderness ; the cry was, Let us go back to Egypt. So when they would have a king of Samuel ; so now, "no king but

Cæsar;" not God, not Jesus, the meek and lowly, though their prophet had said, "Behold thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."

Pilate, fearing the tumult, "washed his hands, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person, see ye to it." Strange act in a judge, condemning the man he declares innocent. Then they cried, "His blood be on us and on our children," fulfilling the words of David, "Let the mischief of their own lips fall on the head of them that compass Me about."

But most strikingly by Pilate washing his hands, was the order of Moses in the Old Testament^b fulfilled: "All the elders of that city, that are next unto the slain man, shall wash their hands over the heifer that is beheaded in the valley: and they shall answer and say, Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it. Be merciful, O Lord, unto Thy people Israel, whom Thou hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto Thy people of Israel's charge. And the blood shall be forgiven them. So shalt thou put away the guilt of innocent blood from among you, when thou shalt do that which is right in the sight of the Lord."

^b Deut. xxi. 6—9.

Again, the type of the things of the tabernacle seems fulfilled here which are mentioned in Heb. ix. 19: "When Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people." These injunctions were all fulfilled; our Lord was standing before them in the scarlet robe, signifying the scarlet wool; there was the water with which Pilate washed his hands; the reed in His hand to denote the hyssop, on which they put the sponge of vinegar at the crucifixion; and the blood, that which the Jews took on themselves; and again, it was even now streaming from the thorny crown and the stripes of the scourge.

And we cannot help remarking how every one consents in freeing Him from all charge of guilt or blame. He was without spot or blemish. Judas said, "I have betrayed innocent blood;" Pilate, "I find no fault;" Herod found nothing in Him guilty of death; Pilate's wife called Him "that just Man;" the thief on the cross said He had "done nothing amiss;" the centurion, "Surely this was a righteous man;" so fulfilling the words of the prophet, "Who will contend with Me? which is Mine adversary? let him

come near to Me. Who is he that shall condemn Me?"

And again, the people cry, "His blood be upon us, and upon our children." How striking it was that the whole blame of His condemnation was taken from the Gentiles, and laid on *the whole* nation of *the Jews*. Every part had a share in it. His own disciple betrayed Him; Annas bound Him, Caiaphas condemned Him, the people of Galilee mocked Him. And since *all the people* have a share in His condemnation, it also bore out the type of the Paschal lamb being killed by the *whole* assembly, by members of every household. But still in all the national guilt there was a type of the remnant to be saved. Joseph of Arimathea from the rich and noble, Nicodemus from among the Scribes, the centurion at the cross from the soldiers, the wife of Pilate among noble women, the wife of Herod's steward from the king's household, the thief on the cross of malefactors, Simon of Cyrene of the Gentiles, and each of these individuals from the classes of those who were concerned in His death.

Then, therefore, it was that Pilate delivered Him up that He might be crucified. And here, then, is our blessed Lord again in His own raiment, which, like Joseph's, was a long garment,

covered with blood. But though they now took off the purple robe, they took not off the crown of torture. He took forth our thorns on His sacred head, and lays them not aside.

Such was His Death for our sakes, "by whose stripes we are healed." Oh that we could feel more deeply the sins which made Him die! Yet how little we feel them! And yet we must feel them before His blood will wash them away. But we do not feel them while we go on sinning, still indulging our evil habits, not growing in grace. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." But have you ever mourned? can you use the word *sorrow* to the feeling you have had about sins? How slight compared with His sorrow, which He yet bore for our sakes! He felt infinitely more for, and suffered more under, our sins, than we do ourselves.

SERMON II.

GOOD FRIDAY.

ALL THINGS OF CHRIST TYPICAL.

The things concerning Me have an end.

LUKE xxii. 37.

THERE was never a word or an action of Jesus, from His birth to His death, without a particular meaning and peculiar force. All the things written concerning Him have an end, a meaning, a reality, which the world do not see or know. We may draw aside the veil, and read and see what is behind it. He is *there*, as it were behind a veil, and we must draw it aside to know more of Him, if we wish ; He must be sought for, and He may be found. May we approach Him with holy awe, with enquiring humility, and contemplate for a few moments His day of sorrows, His week of agony. It is my intention to contemplate the events from the judgment-hall

to the cross, seeing the peculiar force and meaning of each, seeing how all things concerning Him have an end ; to continue the consideration from the cross to the sepulchre ; and on Easter morning to take the same view with regard to the Resurrection itself.

I. 1. Judas, then, having taken our Lord in the garden, He was first led to the house of Annas, as being the president of the Jewish council. He was then led to Caiaphas, the high-priest, and examined before him. Here He was struck on His head for His answers.

2. Then came an examination before the Jewish council, early in the morning, and here it was that the two false witnesses gave their witness. At this moment St. Peter denied Christ.

3. Then He was led to Pilate to be tried ; and He was left outside the prætorium, or judgment-hall, and Pilate came out to Him, and the conversation took place related in John xviii. 29—32.

4. After this Pilate returned into the prætorium, and Jesus with him, leaving the Jews outside, and the conversation, John xviii. 33—38, "What is truth," &c., took place.

5. Pilate, without waiting for an answer, came out again from the prætorium, leaving Jesus *alone*

within, to speak to His accusers without ; when the conversation in John xviii. 38 to the end of the chapter took place. In this conversation was his first express declaration of Christ's innocence, and proposal with regard to Barabbas ; all this time Jesus stood alone.

6. Pilate then turned to Jesus, and ordered Him to be scourged.

7. Then he went out the third time, alone, to tell the people Jesus was coming. He came accordingly, wearing the purple robe and the crown of thorns. John xix. 1—5.

8. Jesus, being still in public, exposed, and in such a dress, to the gaze of the people, the conversation took place recorded in John xix. 6—8.

9. Then he entered the prætorium again, the third time, and sent for Jesus ; xix. 9—11. Then he came out the fourth time, and made the third intercession with the people for Jesus.

10. Now it was for the first time that Pilate sat down to judge Him in public. Then came the message from Pilate's wife.

11. Pilate was now seated on his judgment-throne ; the accusation of the Jewish council was then brought, and the question asked, " Art Thou the King of the Jews ?" Then the silence of Jesus, He not answering at all to the questions of the

governor. On this followed his declaration of his conviction of His innocence, and his sending Him to Herod. Being dragged back from Herod, still arrayed in His mock robe, Pilate said, "Behold your King."

Having tried to save Him, Pilate washed His hands of His blood. He then gives Him up to be scourged; He was scourged in public, and this was the second time He had been scourged since the morning. They then cover Him with His own raiment, and lead Him away to crucify Him.

I will now take a more minute and particular view of the case.

II. And I will take four divisions for the remainder of this day of sorrows: 1. From leaving the judgment-hall to the third hour; 2. From the third to the sixth hour; 3. From the sixth to the ninth hour; 4. From the ninth hour to the beginning of the Sabbath, or Saturday morning.

1. Having left the judgment-hall, two thieves were coupled with Him, probably companions of Barabbas. Four soldiers guarded each; so the party was made up of Jesus, His brow still bleeding beneath the crown of thorns, the two thieves, twelve soldiers, and the centurion who commanded them.

So He started on the way of sorrows, clad, like Joseph, in a long garment covered with blood; for still the thorns were there, piercing still His worn and gentle brow,—those thorns, “the chastisement of our peace.” On His shoulder rested the cross, i.e. the cross-beam at top; and this He did like Isaac, bearing Himself the wood for the sacrifice Himself, the Lamb of God, had provided.

Here, then, was the serpent of Moses, suspended on the wood; Abel, led forth into the field to be slain by his brother; and, more striking still, the prophecy of Isaiah, xxii. 22, “The key of the house of David will I lay upon His shoulder;” the key being the cross, that opens and shuts heaven. So He travelled through the city, bearing the cross alone, though faint and weary with His sufferings, teaching us a lesson to bear our cross to the last, and not to faint, however hard it be to bear. At last the sad procession reached the city gate, and Jesus grew very faint; a stranger was seen passing, Simon of Cyrene, a Gentile. The soldiers and Jews thought it a disgrace to touch the cursed tree, the cross; so they would not help the meek and languid sufferer, but arrest this poor Gentile, that he may bear it with Christ, little think-

ing how they were shewing God's work in their act; for this Simon, being a Gentile, and thus having the blessed privilege of bearing the cross with Christ, was a likeness of the Gentiles being now admitted to the privileges of the Gospel, and the rejection of the Jews; yet what they meant for his shame and pain was indeed his glory,—to have been the only person in the world to have helped Christ bear His cross! He in whom the Father was well pleased comes to the gate to meet us Gentiles, and we meet Him at the gate, and go with Him to Calvary, and as we go, bear the cross; for we may not come to Christ without bearing His cross; “if we reign with Him we must also suffer with Him.”

Such were the lessons meant by Simon's action.

2. And now they were out of the city, and on the high road to Calvary, and the procession moved on, when another event happened. Some poor women, touched with the sorrows of the sufferer, follow Him, as people always will to a public execution; and as they went they wept. Jesus never lost an opportunity of doing good, and stopped; He spoke to them—“*Weep not.*” “If these things be done in a green tree, what shall be done in a dry?” or, If I, an innocent person, suffer so much, what will that

guilty Jerusalem suffer, which is as dry wood, prepared for the burning of God's wrath? So the women received a wholesome check in their tears; i.e., He turned their sorrow to good account. And so you will perceive that all the persons concerned about His suffering gave lessons to different states of human nature; that they need being brought to the cross to be healed. Ardent zeal, in St. Peter, was here taught the danger of self-confidence; patient courage was taught its reward in St. John; covetousness shewn by Judas; ambition has its lesson in the crown of thorns and the robe of blood; justice without courage, shewn by Pilate; injustice with cruelty in the chief-priests; wanton cruelty in the soldiers; and affectionate feeling is schooled and taught in the advice given to the women.

You will remark, the children *sang Hosanna*, the women *wept*, and the men cried, "*Crucify Him.*" And so they reach Golgotha.

3. *Golgotha*, or the place of a skull, on Mount Calvary, was the place of common execution among the Jews. On the ground lay the skulls and bones of those who had died there in former executions. It was a place where even death appeared in its most hideous and revolting

shape. It is very remarkable that the Jews' tradition was that in this very hill of Calvary Adam was buried ; so that it was the more striking that Christ was crucified there, for, "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ are all made alive." This place was without the city, in order to shew that Christ did not die for Jerusalem only, but for the whole world ; for all without, as well as within, the Jewish nation.

Having arrived at the place, the soldiers proceed to prepare the Cross, while He stands by. We know not what His thoughts were then ; He felt all the pangs of approaching death and pain, as a man, and all the love of God for those for whom He died. As He stood there they offer Him a bowl of wine and myrrh ; they saw He was weak ; they knew how much He had gone through ; and they, the soldiers, had no spite against Him, He had done no harm to them ; so they pitied Him, and offer Him this to make His pain the less. But He refused it ; He would not suffer one pang the less, as it was for our sakes, and so He would not drink it. And now all is ready,—the cross, the nails, the hammer, the hole dug, and the Victim must be nailed on. They fasten Him to it ; and as the tree had been the means of man's ruin,

from which Satan had tempted Eve ; so now was it his life, even the tree of the cross. On each side of Jesus they place the thieves, and Him in the midst, as if the chief malefactor. As they strike the nails into His hands, He uttered the prayer, " Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," teaching us the lesson of real forgiveness ; when we suffer the worst, then to forgive the most.

Then they put up the title, in three languages, intending by it to make His shame the more known, while in fact they but spread His glory by it ; and the three languages were types of His being now to be preached to all nations and tongues ; so that by writing this, Pilate from a judge became a preacher, a means of telling all people who Christ was. So He hung there, and the deed was done, and the Lamb of God hung on the Cross.

The next event was the dividing the Garments among the soldiers, which took place just after the erection of the cross. The outer garment was divided into four, and given to the four soldiers who had led Him to execution ; the inner one was woven from the top throughout, so they cast lots for It.

Everything respecting Christ's death had a deep and symbolical meaning. Jesus, like Joseph,

having fled from this present evil world, had left His garment behind him in the hands of His enemies ; it was the perquisite of the soldiers. The coat woven from the top throughout was a type of His Church, which should have no divisions in it, but should be one, even as He and the Father are one, without the possibility of a difference. Then was Christ unclothed, that we might be clothed by Him ; He has gone away, but has left His clothing,—left His Church, by which we may be clothed when He has gone until we are restored to Him.

Having done this, the soldiers sat down to watch the Sufferer on the cross, and to see His Agony :—"sitting down, they watched Him there." This, then, was the group,—the three figures on the crosses, Jesus in the midst, a little further off the people standing, gazing in silence and wonder. This was no common execution ; a few passing travellers on the way to and from Jerusalem, —for Calvary was but three quarters of a mile from the city,—as they passed looked at Him and blasphemed Him, shaking their heads, thereby exactly shewing the truth of the prophecy, "They shoot out their lips, and shake their heads ;" and, "They that looked upon Me shook their heads."

A little further were the chief priests and elders, strolling from the city to please their eyes with a view of Him on whom they had now done their worst. "He saved others," they say, thereby with their own lips proclaiming His salvation. And now the soldiers too derided Him, and offered Him vinegar.

So stood the group at the third hour, which is nine o'clock; and now there were six hours more. And this ends the first division of time, —from the judgment-hall to the third hour.

I pass on to consider the events of the next period.

2. It was at this moment, while the soldiers derided, the priests reviled, and the people gazed afar off, that the two thieves set up their revilings too, copying, even in their death agony, the conduct of the others. Both first reviled Him, then one, probably struck with His patient bearing at the judgment and on the cross, was convinced that He was the Christ, and confessed Him. Perhaps he thought of the past, and compared it with the present conduct of Christ, and saw the growing darkness, so strange at noon-day, and so felt convinced that He was God. He, although on the other side of Christ, heard the other reviling, and rebuked him, and then

prayed for pardon, and in a moment was forgiven. Here was the poor in spirit at once forgiven, one of the only persons whom we know was saved; Christ acts as judge between the two, the Cross His judgment Throne, and seeing into the hearts of men, He discerns their thoughts, pardoning the penitent, and having nothing to say to the impenitent. So what Satan meant as His greater shame turned into His glory; being crucified between thieves became the opportunity of His shewing His forgiving power, even to the last moment; and the cruel malice of His enemies became the most remarkable means of offering comfort to sinners in after-years, and treasuring up His most precious words while the world lasted,—that it was never too late for pardon while it was not too late to repent. Though His Hands and Feet are prevented doing good, His Heart can love and His Tongue can pardon; and while the devil turned Adam out of Eden, Christ takes a robber with Him to heaven because he was penitent. It is a comfort to us to know this, that while we repent, however bad we have been, there is pardon. Though we must remember, that while there is this instance of a last hour's repentance, that we may

hope, there is but one, that we may fear. So we see how Christ preferred the true, humble penitent, however evil he had been, to the fair show and deceitful hearts of the Pharisees.

And now there is one more thing to mark in this second period,—the address to His mother. There was one group, among the rest, come with how different feelings and intentions! It was made up of four people — Mary His mother, Mary the wife of Cleopas, Mary Magdalene, and St. John.

All *men* had failed during the last trial, save St. John, he whom Jesus loved. The women still were true to Him. They exceeded the men in courage: first at the sepulchre and last at the cross. God's strength is made perfect in human weakness. And who are these who are nearest the cross, Christ's earthly throne, and the sceptre with which He rules? St. John, with divine, chaste love and calm courage; Mary Magdalene, devout watchfulness and earnest penitence; the other Mary, faithful patience and quiet constancy; of the blessed Virgin little is ever said. Our Lord spoke two things on the cross to human beings,—only two, one accepting the *penitent*, the second enforcing *filial piety*; His two last lessons that He gave to men on earth;

and He left us one reason for admiring and valuing friendship, for to the last we find mention of "the disciple whom Jesus loved." "Jesus, when He saw His mother, and the disciple standing by whom He loved, saith unto His mother, Woman, behold thy son." His Eye had wandered over the many groups gathered there, and at last it fell upon His mother and the band of sorrowers who stood afar off, weeping. And shall Jesus forget His mother? shall He leave her who bare Him to the buffet of a cruel world, who would hate her for His sake? He loved her still, as He ever had done; He knew her love for Him, as He was still her Son; and He knew how sharp was the sword that pierced through her soul when she saw her best-beloved Son,—Him who never did aught amiss, Him who had shewn such obedience, such gentleness,—so unjustly condemned, crucified, and slain, and saw the drops trickle one by one from the Hands she had held in His infancy, and the Brow she had kissed in His Boyhood. He gave her a home; and how holy must the home have been where the mother of Jesus dwelt with that disciple whom He loved the best! Surely if angels ever dwelt anywhere on earth, it would be there. Mary, the mother of Jesus, stood at

...and usually followed
...though she is
...there. For she
...business: but
...live Him,
...and and
...brother,
...gony
...will
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thought of those for whom He died, and prayed for them. It must be a solemn moment,—the groups as they were on Calvary on a sudden surrounded by darkness, wondering if He still lived or were dead. But so it was. And now why did this darkness come? Our Lord's cross was turned with its back towards Jerusalem, and His Face turned to the west; at twelve o'clock, then, the sun would come full in the face of its Maker, and in shame it hid it, and the darkness came. And so the prophet announced: "In that day, saith the Lord God, I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day." This was one of the first tokens, outwardly, of God's displeasure at what was doing to His Son; and the number *three* hours was like the *three* days He remained in the earth. And other prophecies were fulfilled too; such as: "It shall be one day which shall be known unto the Lord, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light. And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem^a." Again: "I will cover the sun with a cloud; all the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over them^b."

^a Zech. xiv. 7, 8.

^b Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8.

So matters were when the three hours had passed away. It was three o'clock in the afternoon, and in the darkness a Voice came from the cross; He cried to His Father. He had passed the three hours of Agony; it was now past; the last bitter drop of the cup was drunk, and He cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

We know not, we cannot know, the agony of the three dark hours; they were hid from view then and knowledge now. We dare not remove the veil which God has thought fit to draw over His feelings and thoughts in those hours, or give the reason for this exclamation.

The soldiers thought He called for Elias,—probably the Greek soldiers, for the Hebrews would have known that the word *Eloi* meant God, and would not have mistaken it for *Elias*. Their remark was, "Let us see if Elias will come." This is the last remark of His enemies, which we have mentioned, which they said, and it is remarkable that it is the same question they had so often asked through His life, "Will Elias come?"

Now once more they offered *the vinegar*, the third time. You will mark, the sponge was put upon *hyssop*. Here was a meaning; though the

soldiers meant nothing by it, God did. The hyssop was a reed, on which the sponge was put, and the hyssop was always used at the Passover, a bunch of it being dipped in the blood of the lamb; and it was with the hyssop that the doorposts of Israel in Egypt were marked with blood^c; it was hyssop which was dipped in bird's blood to cleanse the leper^d; and David says, "Thou shalt purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean^e." It had, then, to do with cleansing, and so was full of meaning in being put to catch the drops that rolled from Him,—drops of atoning blood caught by the hyssop. Jesus said, "*I thirst!*" The thirst of the crucified was always a chief part of their torment.

And now we come to the end, the last scene of the day of sorrows, the last sorrow of Him who was indeed "the Man of sorrows," the last grief with which He was acquainted. Nature now failed; He cried with a loud voice, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit." God was His Father and our Father, His God and our God. It was His last cry, and then He "bowed His head," as if to rest upon His Father's bosom. Beautiful expression!—commended to His Father! His happiness was to be with

^c Exod. xii. 22.^d Lev. xiv. 4.^e Ps. li. 7.

His Father, to do His Father's will, to rest on Him, to take all His comfort there ; on Him His thoughts had rested through six long hours of agony ; three times He had spoken to Him, once He had spoken to His earthly parent ; to the last His soul was full of filial love. But we must not, dare not, look further ; we know no more ; He gave His own Spirit up to the Father, a willing action. No man took His life from Him, He laid it down of Himself ; and, with His back toward the holy city, the figures still gazing on Him, His face toward the sun, which now again broke out, He hung, the Lamb of God, which had taken away the sins of the world. It was the hour of the evening sacrifice, and as He died the Paschal lamb was bleeding in the Temple, and the millions gathered for the Passover were assembled there, little knowing that only those who had followed the despised band for the execution were beholding the true Lamb of that year's Passover ; little knowing that on yonder hill of Calvary, He on whom, dead and quiet now, the evening sun was shining, was the only Being who could take away their sins ; little knowing that *that* deserted cross, standing solitary and unattended on the silent Calvary, held all the sinner's hopes ; little thinking that that

meek face, so torn with thorns and worn with woe, was the only one on which, some day, they would look for pardon. The people saw it all, and smote their breasts, and returned; the women of Galilee stood afar off, beholding. There was an earthquake, a rending in the Temple, a breaking among the graves, and all was over.

Such, blessed Jesus, was Thy week of agony, such Thy day of sorrows; grant us a share in the blessings they have gained.

SERMON III.

GOOD FRIDAY.

ALL THINGS OF CHRIST TYPICAL.

The things concerning Me have an end.—LUKE xxii. 37.

THERE was the cross, and Jesus on it. The people had all gone, and, smiting their breasts with awe, had returned by the trodden path from the hill of execution to the city. The evening sacrifice was going on, and they must be at it. All were gone, and the hues of evening sunk in quiet softness on the hill of Calvary. There were the three crosses, and they on them—one dead, and two still living; one wondering if He that was dead would remember His promise when he died too. Jesus was in the midst: His head hung down as He let it fall at death, resting, as if upon His Father's breast. The thorns yet clung to His Brow, and His Hands hung still by the nails. Were there no watchers? On the slope of the hill there were four people,—probably weeping and watching silently, — three

women and a man. They did not move, they had not for some hours, save once, when yon dead sufferer spoke to them. They were not of Jerusalem, they were from Galilee,—the mother of Him who was dead, His best-beloved friend, the pardoned penitent, and one more. Should they too go away? could they too join the departing throng and leave that cross? could they take their eyes off that face still calm in death? They could not, His words were yet in their ears, His dying cry, and it was pleasure to gaze upon Him; it recalled sweet associations. He said He would come back in three days, but they scarce knew how to think it; at least they would watch Him last. And so twilight sunk upon the cross, and they were watching still.

At first the three women had stood apart, and St. John by the cross. He had probably fetched the Virgin Mary to the cross to receive Christ's last injunction. The other two then came up, and all stood close to the cross, watching. Then we find they withdrew, and stood afar off; and now, most likely, again drew near, and some other women with them who were of His acquaintance. They would naturally have wished to see the last.

And as they watched, the soldiers came from

the Jewish council to break the legs, but finding Jesus was dead they wantonly pierced His Side, and out of it came "*blood and water.*"

It was the time "*of the rising of the stars,*" as the Jews called it, when the soldiers came; the sacrifice was going on in the Temple, and it was against the law for the bodies to remain on the cross through the Sabbath. Wonderfully here, too, did His enemies perform a true work on Christ, for it was meet that He who had laboured hard through His week of sorrows should now rest in the grave *through the Sabbath.*

They broke not His legs, because God had said, "He keepeth all His bones, so that not one of them is broken."

Then they pierced His side, and the "blood and water" came out, being a type of the two Sacraments—Baptism, and the Supper of our Lord, and explained by St. John in his first Epistle: "This is He who came by water and by blood; not by water only, but by water and by blood." So Christ was, even after death, willing to go on shedding His blood for us. Not satisfied with shedding it from His head, hands, and feet, but He even poured it out from His side, after His death, for our sakes.

So His Body poured forth its last Blood, the

first drops being shed in Gethsemane, the last on the cross after death.

And now two figures approach the cross, and they carry linen cloths, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus; they were rich men, especially the first, and he had got leave of Pilate to take the Body. His riches got him access to Pilate. He was most likely one of the seventy disciples, but he worked secretly for fear of the Jews; so he was not finally confirmed in the faith. He was of Arimathea, or Ramah, where Samuel lived and Rachel died. So the prophecy was fulfilled, "Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted because they were not;" as Joseph, may be, went home and wept when he had buried Jesus: and the following verse in Jeremiah beautifully applies; "Thus saith the Lord, Refrain thy voice from weeping and thine eye from tears, for thy work shall be rewarded, and they shall come again from the land of the enemy." So Rachel wept at the tomb of Joseph in spirit, and the good Joseph of Arimathea wept at the tomb of Jesus. Nicodemus came with Joseph, because there should be *two witnesses*, that "in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word should be established."

We may remark how, now that Christ was dead, His kingdom began at once to be established. The moment He died two rich men step out and take His dead Body, bearing its shame ; not His poor disciples or the women of Galilee any more. So the sun was set, and no sooner set than stars came out,—one, and two, even before the evening's close.

These two figures then bear Him away ;—the rich men climb the cross, and lift off the Body, and they wrap it in linen ; but as they go down the hill others followed ; the women were watching still, and they followed still to see where the Body was laid.

Now, further, Joseph brought the linen cloths, and Nicodemus brought the myrrh and aloes, the linen cloths shewing forth the purity of Christ's Church, and to which the linen cloth let down to Peter was likened. And owing to this we cover the altar with a clean linen cloth, because it holds, as it were, the broken Body of Christ in the linen cloth of Joseph ; and the myrrh and aloes fulfilled the prophecy — " All Thy garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia."

Now where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a tomb, and the tomb in a rock. Here they laid Christ, and left Him

there. A rock is always the mark of strength : when God passed by Moses He put him in the cleft of the rock. We remark here the poverty of Christ ; even in His death “ He had not where to lay His head ; ” i. e. nothing of His own, it was the property of another where He lay,—“ the Conqueror of death has no tomb of His own.”

The next day was the Sabbath, a high day among the Jews. And here is a likeness to the creation : it was on Friday God created man, in the afternoon, being the day before *the rest* ; and on Friday, now, Christ redeemed man. On Saturday God rested from the work of creation, and on Saturday Christ rested from the work of death in the grave.

The women, as I said, rose and followed, and watched where He was laid. They are especially mentioned as “ the women of Galilee,” as if to give an especial honour to the country which had been the blessed scene of our Saviour’s infancy, the scene of most of His labours, and where He promised to meet them afterwards. Indeed, shortly before His death, as He passed the Mount of Olives, we read, “ He talked of Galilee,”—a name most dear to Him ; and those few mysterious meetings He had with His dis-

ciples after the resurrection were chiefly in Galilee. In Jerusalem He never appeared again, save in the evening, and in secret. The city had had its punishment; it had seen Him and rejected Him; it should see Him again no more. Its day was past; "He came to His own, and His own received Him not."

And now it was late, and all were gone, even the women, save Mary Magdalen and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.

Such, then, is now the scene; our Lord is lying in the sepulchre, and at the entrance a stone. The sun was gone, and twilight sunk upon the garden and the guilty city. The uproar of the morning was changed for the stillness of the grave, and the sacred silence of the Sabbath had begun; in that now holy garden the stir of the hurried funeral had given place to solitude; the apostles were gone, and the beloved disciple had taken the blessed Virgin back to his own home, but bound by love "on a spot opposite the rocky sepulchre Mary Magdalen and the other Mary were sitting; here, in the silence of the scene, they could collect themselves, and mourn. How much had passed since last night! In the stillness they might look on the bloody city

—‘How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people! how is she become a widow *!’

“But these holy women had no thought much for the city; *that grave* by which they sat took all their thoughts; their hearts were with Him whom their eyes could not see. Could they forget Him? The greatness of their sorrow had been awhile softened by the stillness and ease of death, which succeeded His agonies. The full sense of their loss now came on them, and the stillness and dead calm which goes with death.

‘At length the worst is o’er, and Thou art laid
 Deep in Thy darksome bed;
 All still and cold beneath yon dreary stone
 Thy sacred form is gone;
 Around those lips where power and mercy hung,
 The dews of death have clung;
 The dull earth o’er Thee, and Thy foes around,
 Thou sleep’st a silent corse, in funeral fetters wound.’

“Oh who shall describe the depth of their sorrow and their love! What place so fitting for the poor penitent to weep as this His rocky tomb! So they thought as they sat watching. Lifeless Thou art now, and cold as the rock that holds Thee, and on which Thy head is laid! and pale is Thy body, which at every pore let out its Blood for our sakes,—from Thy hands and feet, and pierced head. It hath left Thee pale and

* See Williams on the Passion.

bloodless indeed, and, wrapt around in the sacred swaddling clothes of death, all Thy holy form hath gone, and we see no more. The Son of Man, which Thou hast become for our sakes, appears no more. And yet am I colder and harder than the rock on which Thy Body is laid. The rocks were rent at Thy dying, but I have watched Thy dying, and step by step followed Thee from sad Gethsemane to this Thy cold tomb; but my heart is not rent, and yet it has all been for me, and yet I am not moved; and on me fall the drops of Thy Blood and the cold sweat of Thy death, even as on the rock, but I am not moved! Thy tomb is the hiding-place of the sinner; here may he kneel by the cold stone on which Thou art laid. This Thy dark, and cold, and silent bed would invite to Thee a sinner, whose heart, like Thy grave, is dark and cold, and Thou wilt give him life, even from Thy dead Body. I grieve over Thee, blessed Jesus, that Thou shouldest undergo such suffering, and I be so unmoved! Thy visage is so marred, so worn, so wounded, and Thou liest in Thy evening sepulchre! Is it for this that Thou hast come, O my God? for my sake? is it for this Thou hast descended from the throne of Thy glory?"

Such was the last scene before the resurrection. Night fell on the city towers, the home of

thousands was lulled to sleep, and in the still garden by starlight the two women were gazing on the tomb where Jesus lay.

We leave them till Easter morning ; and may we weep like them for sin, and cling like them to Jesus.

But I would consider the seven speeches of Christ on the cross more particularly.

We always make much of dying words ; and if of others, how much more of Him, whose every word was sweeter than the honey-comb, and whose word was life. He loved us as never man loved ; He knew as never man knew ; He spake as never man spake ; He spake as one who knew what was in man, and saw to the end.

His words on the cross are full of meaning. First, they were *seven*,—a holy number.

They were as follow :—

1. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do ;" 2. "This day shalt thou be with Me in paradise ;" 2. "Woman, behold thy son ;" 4. "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani ;" 5. "I thirst ;" 6. "It is finished ;" 7. "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit."

First then, these seven sayings shew forth seven duties : 1, forgiveness of injuries ; 2, penitence ; 3, filial duty ; 4, fear of God ; 5, fulfilment of His word ; 6, *perfect* obedience ; 7, resignation.

Secondly, they may be considered as containing in them the seven great mysteries of our faith, and doctrines coming from the cross,—truths laid up in the ark of the covenant: 1, remission of sins; 2, the intermediate state—to be with Christ; 3, the Church the home for the lonely; 4, terribleness of God's judgments; 5, fulfilment of Scripture; 6, justification by Christ; 7, the resurrection of the body.

Thirdly, we may think of them as setting forth the attributes of Christ: 1, His mediation; 2, His kingly power; 3, the Son of Man; 4, His human soul; 5, His human body; 6, His sinless perfection; 7, His willing sacrifice.

And so the cross may become to signify divers things: 1, the throne of our King; 2, the altar of our High-priest; 3, the tribunal of our Judge; 4, the mercy-seat of our God; 5, the trophy of the Conqueror of death; 6, the ensign of the Captain of our salvation; 7, the rod of His justice against sinners.

So may the cross be turned into many things to us; and in each it is beautiful; and in each of these characters we have some typical meaning mentioned in the Bible: 1, in the first, "the sceptre of His kingdom is a right sceptre;" 2, Aaron's rod that budded, and so shewed the true priesthood; 3, the rod of Moses, which destroyed

Pharaoh ; 4, the ark of Noah, which saved from the deluge ; 5, the staff of Elisha, which was laid on the dead child ; 6, the spear of Joshua, which he spread over Ai ; 7, the axe laid at the root of the tree, spoken of by John the Baptist.

And again, in seven different ways, likened to the sayings on the cross, does He speak of Himself in the parables :—

1. “ Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,”—in the bountiful creditor who forgave his debtor the thousand talents.

2. “ This day shalt thou be with Me in paradise,”—in the good Shepherd finding his lost sheep.

3. The giving the blessed Virgin to St. John, —“ Woman, behold thy son,”—in the good Samaritan giving the wounded traveller to the host’s care.

4. The cry of desertion,—“ My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ? ”—to the cry of the publican, “ God be merciful to me a sinner.”

5. “ I thirst,”—to the dying Lazarus, who, while angels watched to take his soul to paradise, hungered and thirsted at the rich man’s gate.

6. “ It is finished,”—in the bridegroom shutting the door.

7. “ Father, into Thy hands, I commend My

spirit,"—in the good and faithful servant entering into the joy of his Lord.

So were His dying words full of meaning and force, and teach us great lessons.

And let me, above all, impress on your mind the lesson of *filial obedience*—obedience, first to God, and then to our earthly parents.

In the tomb of Christ we learn true wisdom ; in this darkness we see light. As to Elijah the rocky cell in the wilderness, so to us the rocky cell in the desert of the world, where we sit and listen to our Saviour's voice, or gaze on His form. It is in stillness and solitude He ever visits the heart of man ; while the world with its noises bustles round us, this chamber of death is as the lodging place for wayfaring men in the wilderness. Here, buried with Christ, we may shut out temptation. Here is His holy body, stiff and cold ; this may teach us to die to the world ; this may teach us to cool our hot passions, to love only purity. And here, in this cold tomb, in the cleft of a rock, should we take our shelter while the storms of this world pass by. This is a place to hide us in ; here is a quiet shade, a sweet resting place, by Christ's dead Body, who died for us.

SERMON IV.

GOOD FRIDAY.

THE DAY OF SORROWS.—HISTORICAL.

ISA. liii. 3.—*He is a Man of sorrows.*

ALL was quiet, and He was in the grave. At three o'clock He died; the calm of death took the place of the struggles of dying; the brow which had bled just now was pale and bloodless, and the thorns pressed on wounds which could not bleed. That eye, which had looked with such love on all who knew Him, which had looked round at the last Supper with such love and such sorrow, was closed now, and His Hands no longer streamed with blood. Drop by drop it had trickled out, and there was no more to come, the last drop had run out, for your sake and mine. There He hung till six in the evening; His bloodless Body, with the evening sun sinking on its still Face. What love to us lost sinners! Had we been standing

there should we not have loved to stand and gaze on That Form ?

It was not quite alone ; the great number of the people who had come to see Him die had gone ; there were still left a few—His mother, and St. John, and Mary Magdalene. How that disciple must have looked with a love and adoration which we cannot express, on the last hours of his beloved Master ! Such was the scene on Calvary between three and six in the afternoon. At six He was taken down by Joseph, and laid in His grave, and by seven He was lying there, and the two Maries watching by the tomb.

But let us trace His steps through the events since Wednesday.

1. On Wednesday evening He was at Bethany, and in a house, talking to His disciples, saying, perhaps, words of comfort before He left them, though they did not know how soon. Judas went out, and walked in the evening light to Jerusalem to betray Him. He must have gone over Mount Olivet, and passed the barren fig-tree ; how awful the withered boughs must have looked as He passed it by moonlight, going alone to sell his blessed Master ; and that tree had been cursed by Jesus because it had no fruit. How like Judas himself ! He sold Him, made

his last bargain, and came back to Bethany! How could he? and mix again with that little company!

2. On Thursday, Jesus, when the even was come, went with the twelve to Jerusalem to eat the Passover,—their last journey from Bethany to the town. Peter and John had got it ready, in a large upper room. They had met a man whom our blessed Lord told them they should.

They entered the room and sat down, the twelve round the table, and He in the midst, St. John leaning on His bosom, Judas, probably, at the end, and St. Peter near it.

When they were all set down, He took the cup, and gave them; this was the first cup, not that of the Sacrament. The words of St. John will here come in, "Now supper being ended, Jesus, knowing that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto His Father, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them to the end." He never ceases to love His own — never. Blessed thought! St. John says it; he who watched every word from His lips, and dwelt on his Master's love with a delight none else understood.

Then He rose and washed their feet.

Then He sat down again, and looking round

on them all, was troubled in spirit. Judas was there, the traitor. It is sad to have one among friends whom we *know* is untrue. 'Then He said the awful words, "One of you shall betray Me." One of *us* betray *Him*! 'They were silent, and began to say, "Lord, is it I?" and another, "Lord, is it I?" and then they began to enquire among themselves which of them it was that should do this thing. None felt sure he was not the one; none trusted himself. St. Peter was most anxious; he beckoned St. John to ask the question who it was. He, then leaning on Jesus' breast, said, "Lord, who is it?" The answer was in secret; they did not hear Him; Jesus said, "He it is to whom I shall give a sop when I have dipped it." "Then Judas, who betrayed Him, said, Lord, is it I? He said unto him, 'Thou hast said.'" He gave Judas the sop, and he went out to the high-priest's house, to tell them where Jesus was, and to bring the soldiers.

When Judas was gone, our blessed Lord was relieved; a weight of sorrow seems to have been taken off; He was among His friends, and He spoke of His glory. 'Then He bid them farewell: "A little while I am with you. Ye shall seek Me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go ye cannot come; so now I say to you." St. Peter, always

first in warmth and zeal, thought He was really going, if He talked so, and said, "Lord, whither goest Thou ? Jesus said, Whither I go thou canst not follow Me now, but thou shalt follow Me afterwards. Peter said, Lord, why cannot I follow Thee now ? I will lay down my life for Thy sake." Then our Lord told him he would deny Him. Then came the strife. Then He gave the holy Sacrament, the bread ; then He arose and gave the cup ; then the great intercession ; then the hymn ; then the walk to the garden, and St. Peter's words about not denying Him, for our Lord said they should all be offended.

At twelve they reached the garden. We now begin to count by hours. He left the eight at the gate, and took the three with Him. When He reached the middle of the garden He was torn from the three and fell on the ground, and then came the agony, His soul's exceeding sorrow, and His prayer to the Father. Having prayed once He rose up, and walked back to see what they were doing. He found them all three asleep—sleeping for sorrow, worn out, overcome. He woke them, and went back and prayed again ; and again, ever mindful of His own, He came back. They still slept. How must they have felt when, starting up from the ground, they

heard His calm voice waking them. Had they left Him alone again to watch, and fallen asleep? He spoke it to Peter especially.

A third time He prayed, and used the same words. How simple and beautiful His prayer was! plainly shewing that we need not use many different words in praying to God; the same words become most accustomed to our lips and to His ear; He knows them again.

During the prayer was the agony, the first blood shed for us in the garden; then came the angel, mentioned by St. Luke, to comfort Him.

If they had kept awake they would have seen no common sight; under the moon the dark shadow of Jesus kneeling, the ground around glittering, not with dew-drops, but the dark purple drops of blood; and by that kneeling man a bright angel, his wings spread out in the moonlight, come "to comfort Him, the Comforter of all!"

"Clouds were on His sorrows; one alone

His agonizing call

Brought down from heaven to calm that bitterest groan,

And comfort Him, the Comforter of all."

Strange sight, indeed,—and when that man was the Son of God, content to die!

Again He returned to them; they still slept; He bade them sleep on. Then a silence, till He saw the glare of lanterns through the dark olive

garden, and knew that Judas was coming. He found Him out, knew where He often went—a garden at night—oft-times resorted thither—found opportunity to take Him, to give Him up. He rose up. They gathered round Him; now they should see the traitor—the “one of you which should betray Me.”

Our Lord went forward to meet Judas, each separate from his company. “Friend, wherefore art *thou* come?” Still kind to the last; still willing to reclaim the barren fig-tree before it was quite dead. The kiss. Then He asked them, “Whom seek ye?” They say, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Asking this probably for the sake of His disciples—“Let these go their way”—never thinking of Himself; “having loved His own, He loved them to the last,” or, as the disciple of love says at this point, “Of those whom Thou hast given Me have I lost none.” Malchus, probably, first laid hold of Him, and Peter struck off his ear. The three were roused to anger; no time for sleep now. They had two swords between them, and Peter, always first, began to see how matters were going. He healed the ear. “The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?” “Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled”—and they led Him away.

Now we cannot but be struck with the way in which He made every thing to do with Him have to do with us. He put our nature upon Him ; He laid aside His garment, and quitted Himself ; put us on, and put His glory by. His death,—so like ours ; the three friends, and the eight at the gate, so like us. We would have friends with us when we die, the most faithful, the friends of youth, the companions of days gone by. They are a great support to us, and Jesus lets us have them by having them Himself. But they slept, and so do ours ; sorrow wears out the kindest friend. We have even felt sleepy at the dying pillow of our own ; so did they. Jesus shews us how earthly friends are not enough ; we must have God. “He who keepeth Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps.” So in all His death so like us—“He knoweth our frame, He remembereth we are but dust ;” so weak, so human, so feeble, so *man*. His martyrs died with more boldness than He ; they wept not, nor said they were exceeding sorrowful ; they met death as if they braved it ; He, as if He felt it ; they were like triumphing soldiers going to the reward, He, like a sinking child ; they made the best of it, He bore and sunk ; they, being men, tried to die as God ; and He, being God, tried to die like man.

1. They led Him to the high-priest; then He was examined by the chief-priest alone at the end of the long room. He at one end amid the crowd, around His blessed form were the soldiers and the servants. Peter had by this time come back; he had fled, but, ashamed, came back and followed afar off, to see the end. He sat at the other end of the hall, to warm himself. This was about two o'clock, and being a spring night, it was cold. The denial,—the look. Then the chief-priest goes out, and they mock Him.

2. They next took Him before the council, who asked Him the same question—"Art Thou the Son of God?" This brings us to about three o'clock.

3. At five, probably, He was taken to Pilate, hurried down the street, and the people, who by this time were up and about, followed to see the matter.

Then, as soon as the council had condemned Him to death, Judas heard it. He guessed, perhaps, that it would come to this: it came over him in a moment. Jesus, his Master, innocent, was to be killed, and *he* had done it. Bad as he was, he never meant that; he wanted the thirty pieces of silver, but this end he had not fully seen. Perhaps he met that patient, calm form being

hurried down the street by the soldiers; he went and gave back the money;—what use to him with an aching heart? He gave it back: the priests received him with these awful words? “What is that to us, see thou to it.” He went and hanged himself. Utter despair! no hope, no pardon, not a ray in the darkness! the fig-tree barren, dead, cursed, root and branch.

4. He stood before Pilate; the Jews would not come in, so Pilate came out. They were afraid of defilement. “What accusation bring ye against this Man? They answered and said unto him, If He were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered Him up unto thee. Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye Him, and judge Him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death; that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which He spake, signifying what death He should die^a.”

5. Pilate, having heard them, went back, and called Jesus; He, patient and bound, came. He and Pilate were alone^b. Then the conversation took place about being a king, and the kingdom, and truth.

6. Pilate went back, and left Jesus *alone* with-

^a John xviii. 29—32.

^b John xviii. 33—38.

in the door, and spoke again to the Jews: "I find in Him no fault at all. But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews? Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas."

7. Then again Pilate went back, and tried to get the Jews to be more pitiful on seeing Him suffer. Pilate ordered Him to be scourged, and dressed in purple, and crowned with thorns.

8. Then he came out the third time, and bade the people look, for He is coming. Jesus had not yet come out, nor had the people seen Him since they first brought Him down. "Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the Man!"

9. Jesus stood there, in the gaze of the multitude, bound, and crowned. Oh adorable Jesus, before whom we shall soon stand to be judged! Pilate again tried to release Him: "Take ye Him, and crucify Him: for I find no fault in Him. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God."

10. Then He went back again, and took Jesus with him alone, and he continued: "Whence art

Thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Then saith Pilate unto Him, Speakest Thou not unto me? knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee, and have power to release Thee?"

11. A fourth time Pilate came back.

12. Then He determined to judge Him, and came out, and sat in the judgment-seat. Here Matthew and Luke give the fullest account.

He hears again the accusation. He asked Him, "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" and He answered, "I am."

Then again Pilate declared Him innocent.

13. The sending to Herod.

14. Then the message from his wife.

15. And on the return the cry "Behold your King." "Away with Him."

16. Pilate purposed to chastise Him and release Him; seven times he purposed in vain.

17. He washed his hands.

18. Then delivered he Him unto them to be crucified.

And without narrating those other circumstances which describe the scene on the cross, let us imagine the calm, pale face of death, the brow, with the wounds of the thorns, not bleeding now; the hand wounded, not bleeding, and the two Maries watching by His side; the noise

of the distant city the only sound to break in on the still twilight garden.

Blessed Jesus ! there Thou art at last on the Sabbath—Thy Sabbath. “The sun had set upon the guilty city, St. John had taken the Blessed Virgin home ; and, bound to Him by close affection, on a spot opposite the rocky tomb, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting. Here, in the silence of the scene, they could recollect themselves a little, and mourn, turn to the guilty city and say, ‘ Righteousness lodged in it, but now murderers.’ ”

Blessed Jesus ! would not we sit with them by that cold grave, and give all the world for Thee ; count all things loss to gain Thee ; give up enjoyments for one blessed word of pardon from those gracious lips, which death had sealed for our sake ?

SERMON V.

DEATH-BED PARDON. THE DYING THIEF.

To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise.—LUKE xxiii. 43.

OUR great doubt and difficulty consists not in knowing whether Christ will save the penitent, for we have His word for that,—“Come unto Me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;” nor in whether He must be the Saviour of the sinner, and none else, for we well know that “there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved,” but His. Our doubt is, “*Do I repent?* have I left off sin? have I really begun to break through my bad habits? does not the constant return of strong temptation make me reasonably doubt if I am sincerely penitent? are my feelings to be trusted? does my practice bear them out?” With some men this is an anxious question, a question of bitter, earnest enquiry; with others it is answered and satisfied

too easily : a few penitent feelings, a few of Mary's tears without Mary's acts, and that is enough ; a going out to weep bitterly, but no being first at the sepulchre ; a coming to oneself, and thinking of one's Father's house, but no arising and going thither ; a cry of " Jesus, have mercy on me !" but no casting away the garment and coming to Him. These are the great number of mankind, who cry " Peace, peace, when there is no peace."

And for these it is needful especially to dwell on the acts of repentance, on the right, needful spirit of repentance. For these especially, as well as for others, we must urge a deep, searching, bitter enquiry, Am I penitent ? am I bringing forth the fruits and spirit of repentance ?

Let us turn away for a few moments from this rigid enquiry and heart-searching, to look at Him who died, and died for the penitent. Thank God, we may do this. Lent is drawing to its close ; God grant we have looked deeply, narrowly, candidly, into the state of our repentance. We approach the sad yet joyful season of His Passion who is our hope ; the dark curtain of penitence is drawing up, and behold, the cross, and Him who hangs upon it, and the Blood which flows for us ; still a dark, sad scene,—a

figure of sorrow, but the light of heaven on His brow. Through a humble, penitent spirit we see Him; Lent draws away, and Good Friday is gradually revealed. We have been prepared for it, and having (God grant it) wept for sin, and striven against it, we are allowed to behold other figures, to make up the group of Calvary,—among them the penitent receiving pardon for his penitence from that cross, now made a judgment-throne,—pardoned for our consolation. So is Lent a good preparation for Good Friday, and the scene of Calvary a consoling picture after the penitence of Lent. “This day shalt thou be with Me in paradise.” Why? Because you are penitent. Then, true penitent, there is every hope for you.

We will, then, take the case of the thief, as a consoling reflection for us who have reached a truly penitent heart.

Let us, then, examine the case of the thief.

a. The first thing which may strike us in his case is only mentioned and dwelt upon by St. Luke; St. Matthew merely speaks of *the two thieves* reviling Him, in a case of so great importance to the sinner’s comfort. How is this?

1. The simple answer will be, that St. Luke’s

is to be considered the accurate account of our Lord's life, as it is the one which strictly observes the order of events in their right arrangement, and St. Matthew's throughout seems to have been written to give as much of our Lord's acts as possible, without the same attention to *the order and accuracy*. Thus when St. Luke mentions a fact which St. Matthew does not mention, but does *not contradict*, we may naturally take St. Luke's account.

2. St. Luke seems to have had it as his especial object to dwell on and narrate the circumstances of our Lord's Death and Passion, and after events.

3. Though St. Matthew may seem to give a different account to St. Luke of this event, it may, after all, perfectly agree. St. Matthew says, "The thieves who were crucified with Him railed on Him." Now, we often find that one evangelist mentions one person as concerned where another mentions two, as in the case of the blind men of Jericho; or, they may have both reviled Him at first, and afterwards the one, struck by the darkness and earthquake, and the extreme patience of Jesus, have been converted and repented. All which St. Matthew may have omitted, as not being so anxious to

give a detailed account of the sufferings and Passion as St. Luke.

4. Another reason why St. Luke may have given this account and none of the rest, may be the fact that he more especially wrote to shew forth the character of our Lord as our High-Priest and Intercessor, as St. Matthew did His human nature, and St. John His divine. And this beautiful story is one peculiarly shewing forth the character of our High-Priest, who could be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities;" so he alone gives us the Prodigal Son, and dwells so largely on Mary Magdalene.

These reasons may account for the mention of this being made only by St. Luke; St. Matthew must be explained by St. Luke, and not St. Luke by St. Matthew.

β. It was the opinion of the ancients that the thief was baptized by the water and blood which flowed from our Saviour's side; or, more commonly, that his very suffering, and repenting in his suffering, would be taken as a martyrdom, and martyrdom was considered as equal to baptism, if a man had never been baptized before, it being called often the "baptism of blood." Some few have thought that this thief might have been converted in prison, before the cruci-

fixion, but the facts of the story make it improbable.

So the very cross which His enemies intended as a shame, became the throne from which He gave mercy; and the fact of the thief being crucified with Him, meant to increase His degradation, became the opportunity of His pardoning the worst of sinners, and giving comfort to multitudes in after days. So God overrules the works of wicked men. So, again, our Lord's prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," became the means of converting a sinner, as St. Stephen's did St. Paul, and it was believed in after days that the prayers of martyrs did the same for their murderers.

And now of our Lord's promise to the penitent, "*This day.*" This passage, at all events, shews that the souls of the dead did go immediately into some state of rest and peace, and that they are not, as some think, in a state of slumber and unconsciousness; but that all go to a place to await the judgment,—the good to a place of peace, to await the greater joys of heaven; the bad to one of sorrow, to await the greater agonies of hell.

And this may be established from many passages of holy Scripture.

It was said of Judas; "He went to his own place," meaning the place which was *due* to him as a sinner. Then St. Paul was caught up, first into the third heaven, and then into paradise, as a place of less glory, where the souls wait for the third heaven after the resurrection. Then the soul of Lazarus was caught up at once into Abraham's bosom. Again, in Revelation, there are the souls under the altar, who cry, "Lord, how long?" and for the dead to be soon released to full, final glory, we daily pray, saying, "Thy kingdom come."

When the Jews wished well for a parting soul, they said, "Let his soul be in the Garden of Eden." It was their tradition that souls did go there, if good, directly on death; and probably it was to this opinion our Lord spoke when He told the thief that he should be that day with Him in paradise. Had the Jewish tradition been an untrue one, He would probably not have so fallen in with it as to use it in this way. So these words to the penitent thief bring comfort to us when penitent, assuring us that we shall, immediately on death, pass from a state of suffering and sorrow, into one of rest, and peace, and patient expectation, where we await for heaven, where we are daily hoping for the coming

of the Lord Jesus Christ, to give us a share in that kingdom to which by baptism we are heirs.

Such was His last promise who died to save, from the cross, His judgment-throne. To the poor felon hanging by His side, the object of mercy and the subject of penitence, He declared pardon and heaven ere yonder sun should have sunk to its evening home; and while cruel men stood by to mar His saving work of mercy, their very malice made His Name and saving power more widely and blessedly known. How often has it comforted the unhappy! how often has it strengthened the weak and doubting,—those blessed words from Calvary, “This day shalt thou be with Me in paradise!”

And now let us apply this more immediately to ourselves. And first by way of caution.

Men take this as an encouragement to trust to a death-bed repentance. Now of death-bed repentances it is hard to speak. Such things, we believe, have been, *but seldom*. It is a hard thing, when years have been spent in sin, to turn to God when the opportunity of shewing our repentance is taken away. At all events, we who are left behind can have but little comfort about a death-bed repentance; we can have no sure hope that the soul has gone to rest. And

I should imagine it is but seldom, if ever, that such a person has peace of mind at death; they may sometimes, of God's unsearchable goodness. As I said, such things *have been* as death-bed repentances, but God forbid we should any of us put off our repentance on a hope so uncertain, so vague, as that we can or shall repent then; the very intention to do it, and putting it off, is itself a reason why we should probably never do it; better never to have thought of it; then there would be better hope that we might turn. But it is hard, with a sick, dying body and fainting strength, to look deeply into sin, to break off evil habits, to *know* and *fear* God. If we can repent, there is no doubt God will even then receive us. But the case of the penitent thief is often stretched too far; we must remember, he had never till then been baptized, or known anything of Jesus Christ as a Saviour. You do know the will and law of God; you have been baptized; you live in a day of large grace and knowledge, if you would use it. So your case is somewhat different. It still does offer comfort to those who by God's mercy are brought to repentance in the last day of life, however few and improbable their cases may be. I do not say there are not many

cases which *appear like repentance* on a death-bed ; the *natural solemnity* of approaching death, the recollecting of religious lessons of early childhood, the fear of judgment, the being cut off from external objects of sin, the being thrown in more immediate connection with their families and relations,—all these things mislead us, and give an appearance of repentance where there is none at heart.

Again, the way men have of satisfying themselves as to a dying man's condition by some few expressions of hope, or by some placidity of countenance, or absence of struggle at the last agony, or the possession of sense to the end, often misleads observers as to real repentance. I do not say we are to pass judgment on the state of mind of dying men,—God forbid ; we always hope the best ; we stand by in solemn silence, hoping, praying, not deciding, trusting the passing soul to God's good mercy ; but where there has been no holy life we dare not take such a death as our encouragement.

Such are the remarks which his case whom we consider to-day suggests on a death-bed repentance. We cannot tell what goes on in the mind before death, but we are bound to hope the best ; at least this is sure, save in cases of those

who have died rejecting God's mercy and commandments ; we can never be sure of the worst.

And this suggests another reflection on the penitent thief. It is singular how the Christian character was, in the few moments of his death, shewn forth in him,—*faith*, *hope*, and *charity* ; *faith* in believing in Jesus Christ,—“ Dost thou not fear God ? ” and how great, when all had forsaken Him, and Christ was least like God ; *hope*, in asking to be admitted into heaven,—“ Lord, remember me ; ” *charity* towards his fellow-sufferer, in urging him to avoid the sin of railing against God. So even in his dying hour, short as it was, there was a sign of each feature of the perfect Christian character fully developed. And so he dying, as it were, preached to those who stood around, by his confession and rebuke ; and so he dying should speak to the living.

The two robbers may be taken as examples of two classes of men : those who, having been baptized, serve God ; and those who, being baptized, serve Him not ; for they, as we are, were baptized into His death. And in one was fulfilled Rom. x. 10 : “ With the heart man believeth unto righteousness ; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

Such were *his* condition and acts,—best of

Christ's work for him and us. Blessed, and ever blessed story of pardon, proclaimed even while the pardoning blood was trickling from His side ! Blessed, because, though His blood has ceased to flow, it is still as it were flowing on, ever running over, a pardoning stream for our salvation, saving the worst of sinners, saving at all times, in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment. So pardon was connected with the very cross, and the word of forgiveness connected with Calvary itself. We may not see Him, when we die, with mortal eyesight ; we may not hang by Him, and bear His human shame with Him ; yet each reproach cast on us He feels as cast on Him ; and the dying Form, unseen by our mortal eyesight, as it fails in death, is seen by the eye of faith as surely and as effectively ; " Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed."

Now of the parts of this pardon.

Jesus gives us more than either we desire or deserve. His grace is more full and free than our prayers. He said, " Lord, remember me when Thou comest in Thy kingdom ;" Jesus said, " This day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." See His love, how great, how excelling ! But repent fully, and He is waiting to pardon,—oh how fully,—to take you at once to His glorious home

on high. When you come to lie in the body, as men do and must, on the bed from which the coffin will be your only carrier, and the grave your only change; when your tired eye fixes itself on the fair world without, which has no more to do with you, and your sinking body is failing to give its accustomed support; then if His name is that on which you trust, and His will that by which you walk, on that day your soul shall be at rest. "He is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness." You will soon be far away from all change, all sin, all sorrow, where "the Lamb shall lead you beside fountains of living waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes." God gives dying grace; He will form the Christian character in an hour, if the heart be right.

Jesus, like a conqueror returning home in triumph, took in His train, as conquerors do, the best and first of His conquests. He led captivity captive; He who was just now a captive in prison has led a captive to heaven. The devil drove Adam out of paradise, and Jesus took a thief there before apostles.

And think, too, how *at once He pardoned*. He knew the heart; He said but one word to him,—a promise of paradise. He had heard his

confession, He saw his heart. The reason why we cannot trust to death-bed repentance is that we fear to trust words, when we cannot know the heart. He knew all, and whatever men may say of us, or however they may doubt, if our heart lies open to Him, His eye and word is enough, all we need care about. It is before Him you stand, and by Him you will be judged. If you have been a great sinner, men will scoff at your repentance, and call it a mere mockery and pretence. Doubtless the Pharisees scoffed at His taking a thief to paradise, as they did when Mary knelt beside Him, saying that this man knoweth not she is a sinner.

“Greater is He that is for you than he which is against you.” Amid the scoffs and doubts of the world, if your heart be true to Jesus Christ you shall mount to heaven despite them all. “Though your sins be as scarlet; they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” “I am come, who feed My sheep among the lilies; I have found a sheep, a lost one; but I lay it on My shoulders, for he believeth, and hath said, I have gone astray like a sheep that was lost.”

Here, in this holy story, is the whole Gospel,

—a sinner saved ; saved, not by the merit of his own works, but by the merit of Christ's Blood ; yet having first come to Christ by penitence, and shewn his sincerity by faith, hope, and charity.

SERMON VI.

THE CRUCIFIXION.

There they crucified Him.—LUKE xxiii. 33.

FOUR days of this sorrowful yet happy week are passed away ; we have come to the most sad, the most important, of its blessed number—Good Friday. Good, because on it the only perfect Man that ever lived died ; good, because on it heaven was opened to us and hell shut for the believer ; good, because if on one day in the passing year we ought to keep ourselves holy, it is to-day. And yet how sad a day it is ; how sad the tale of suffering which brings to us the agonies of our Redeemer ; sad, when we remember how little we thank Him for His love, or feel for His sorrow. Oh would to God we could feel the love an angel feels, for whom Jesus never died ! would that the sun that rose to-day had found us all prostrate in tears

and sorrow for the sins that brought Him here ! But cold, beyond expression cold,—dead, passing description dead, we are as worldly minded, as sinful, as careless, as indolent on the day He died as we are on any other. Is it not so ? and why should it be ? Have you no love, no care, for a never-dying soul ? is heaven nothing ? is hell a trifle ? have you no gratitude in you, that your praise and sorrow have been so slight to-day ?

See to it, I beseech you, for it is your own fault. It is not so in heaven. No, if days and hours are marked and numbered there, for many an hour have ten thousand thousand happy spirits—ransomed, blessed spirits—shouted their triumphant song of praises to the Lamb. While you yet slumbered on your bed,—you who have a soul that *may* yet be lost,—the ransomed in heaven of six thousand years were gathered round the great white throne, and their robes of flowing whiteness glittered with a dazzling brilliance as they stood before the Lamb—the Lamb that was slain—slain for them on this the birthday of their salvation ; loud from the happy bosoms had the echo shouted, “ Worthy is the Lamb that ” (on this day) “ was slain, to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and blessing.” And you,—what were

you doing? you who are not yet saved, you who may have no part in the Death of Christ after all? you who *may* be still lost? were you also praying, if not praising? angels, who were never saved, struck their golden harps to the same tune of glory, they joined in the nightly hymn of thanks—thanks that *you* were saved, and yet you, perhaps, thought nothing of it. Oh the deadness of these unfeeling hearts, the emptiness of our feeling or our love! I said, if days and years are counted in that happy world, such this morning has been their employment, for they know better than we what they have gained in heaven, how blessed it is to be free from sin, how immense was the purchase the Death of Jesus made.

Days *are* marked on earth; we are *not* in heaven yet; we may, after all, be lost. Let us, then, see what happened to-day.

a. Let us for a moment fancy ourselves one of the crowd that followed Jesus of Nazareth through the streets of the city. Can you not see Him outside the hall of judgment? it is full—Pharisee, Sadducee, publican and sinner, Jew and Roman, all are there; the friends of those whom He had raised from death, from sickness, and from pain; the father of the restored child, the

friend of some recovered lunatic, all healed by the hand of Jesus,—all are there ; there to see Him condemned, there to join in the shout of “ Crucify Him ; ” there to hate and insult the only friend they ever really had. Each eye is bent upon the Form of Jesus as He enters ; He comes wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe ; there He stands, the guiltless object of all their hatred,—gentle as He had been when He healed *their* children and raised *their* dead. The soldiers had arrayed Him in that crown of thorns and that robe of purple to make Him in mockery like a king ; and as the silent and gentle Sufferer moved along the judgment-hall, amid the scoffs of that revengeful throng, they shout at Him,—“ Hail, King of the Jews ! ” But Pilate sees no cause of death. What had He done ? The Roman can see no cause of harm. But the Jews, the people for whom Jesus had done all, they see enough of offence, they will not hear of release—“ To the Cross with Jesus of Nazareth,” is the only wish they have ; the robber were better than He—“ They ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.” Without a word He hears His sentence, and they lead Him out ; His robe of mockery is taken off, and His own garment thrown upon Him ; the thorns

still press His bleeding brow ; there is no delay ; the rough cross is ready, and laying it on His shoulders they lead Him out of the city. Calvary was not far, but too far for that worn-out form to bear its weight. The very soldiers pitied Him, and they lay it partly on Simon. The hill of Calvary was that where they always put offenders to death, and therefore it was covered with the bones and skulls of those who had lingered their last in that lonely spot. The cross is placed in its hole, and the form of Jesus stretched upon it ; it is placed upright. No death was so painful as crucifixion ; the extension of the arms, and the weight falling on the nails, produced the most wearisome torture. The sufferer often hung three days and three nights ere death released him from his agony. One part of his distress is the fearful thirst it creates. "There they crucified *Him*." Above His Head the soldiers had fastened in mockery a tablet, giving the title by which He had called Himself—"the King of the Jews." It was ever the custom to fasten the crime of the person in letters above his head. They spared Him not even *there* ; they stand to insult Him, when we might have thought they had done their worst. It was evening when Jesus died, the hour of the evening

sacrifice, and the priests were gathered in the Temple offering it. The sun, not far from setting, was darkened, and the shadow of night sunk upon the world; the earth rocked to and fro, and the riven graves gave up their mouldered dead. Prophecy after prophecy was fulfilling fast, and the hour drew on when the things concerning Jesus "had their end." The world knew nothing, and cared less, for what was passing there; they knew not that their sins were receiving punishment in a spotless victim. At length, worn out with suffering, faint, weak, and wasted, Jesus died. Sometimes the sufferer hung long upon the cross; ten days they have been known to do it, until the birds of prey have torn out their eyes; but a few hours ended the sufferings of our Redeemer. Convinced of His innocence by the wonders they saw around, the multitude smote their breasts and returned to the city, with feelings different to those with which, urged on by the envy of the Pharisees, they had persecuted Him in the judgment-hall and along the streets. All was over, and the Lamb of God was offered for the sins of the world.

3. It would be of little use to read and hear this tale of unequalled sufferings and unequalled

innocence, if we rested satisfied with only feeling it. Tears we may shed in rivers over the plain, pathetic story of the death of Christ ; it would be of little use if this were all—"Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but for yourselves and for your children."

If you have any feeling for His death and sufferings, shew it in your own sorrow for your sins that made Him bleed ; remember that the nails that pierced His hands and feet were the sins which you each day commit, and the thorns upon His brow were the evil thoughts and imaginations of your vile hearts.

What, then, are the useful views of the death of Christ which we might take ?

1. The sins that caused His suffering.

2. The love that brought Him down.

γ. It is of no use always speaking smooth things ; it is of no use always speaking *generally* about sins ; it is of no use to be always blaming the Jews for crucifying Him, and our neighbours' sins for being the cause. It was *your* sins as much as theirs. Do not lay the blame on your neighbour, and satisfy your own conscience by saying "his sins called for a sacrifice so great, while *mine* did not ;" do not hide your face behind a multitude, and think that as

Christ died for the sins of the world He did not die as much for you. *Your* sins were as much the cause of His death as the sins of the whole world ; and if you were the only sinner on earth, and all else without a stain, *your* sins would have required the death of Christ to forgive them. Therefore you have cause to weep when you read of His death. But weep not for Him, but for yourselves.

The question, then, comes — *What is sin ?* This may seem an easy question to answer, but it is more difficult to answer than you think ; you can, likely enough, answer it easily for your neighbour, less easily for yourself. Then what is sin ? When eternity is at stake, when heaven or hell is the consequence, we must speak plainly. Look, then, around you : there is a man, who is a swearer, in common conversation blaspheming God, and using His sacred Name so often that he hardly knows when he does it. He thinks his not knowing when he does it is sufficient excuse for doing it ; light and idle words, frivolous conversation which has no good in it, is his constant and daily practice ; the name of heaven comes into most things he says. That man is a sinner, that man called Christ from heaven.

Another man is a liar, deceiving with his

tongue; when he has been guilty of mischief, or dishonesty, or unkindness, or inconsistency, throwing the blame off himself and putting it all upon another, and then glorying in being able to do it so well. He makes out good stories, half with lies, or perhaps bears false witness against a neighbour, to amuse his companions; he makes more of the truth than he has a right to, to get himself the character of being entertaining. That man is a liar, therefore a sinner, and is guilty of having crucified Christ.

What is a third man? a thief; directly or indirectly he steals from his neighbour; a servant receiving wages and not honestly working for them,—receiving the money and avoiding the work, if possible, he promised to do; wasting his master's property; or a gentleman, by delay or unfairness preventing his servant or his tradesman having his lawful due, or spending what is not his own, because owed to another, on his own luxuries and comfort; holding some post for which he receives the salary, while not the least intending to do the work of it; or knowing he is unable to do it as it ought to be done; that man is dishonest, and a thief. Or a tradesman doing things in such a way as he knows shall soon want repair, writing down more

than is owed him in a bill, or more than his goods are worth, trusting to the forgetfulness or inexperience of his employer. Or going to a place and purchasing an article: he swears, perhaps, on his life and soul, that he has procured it elsewhere for less, and then having got it at his own price he sells it elsewhere for more, declaring, as he hopes to be saved, or as God is his judge, that he got it for so much more. And this belongs to large matters as well as to small. That man is a thief, dishonest; and so are you if your conscience smite you of the fault; you called down Christ from heaven, you are guilty of His blood.

A fourth is ill-tempered, for ever finding fault, venting his own low spirit, on his own consciousness of fault, in ill-temper towards an innocent person, or taking the least occasion to find fault that rises; glad to have dependants under him whom he may ill-use and reprove at pleasure, without fear of censure, because that dependant dare not speak in self-defence, or is bid be silent if he does. That man is full of malice, and called down Christ from heaven. So did you, if your own conscience smite you. Or the schoolboy, who tells an ill tale of another to screen himself; or from hatred of his companion, per-

haps because he is better than he ; or stirs up a strife for the pleasure of seeing the result of a battle, which should disgust a refined mind to behold, and which a Christian ought to abhor. Or he is cruel towards a younger child because too young to help himself ; or is guilty of a fault, while he hides it in himself and tells it of another. That boy is a hater of his brother, and called down Christ from heaven ; he is as guilty of His death as Pilate or the Pharisees.

Another is a Sabbath-breaker, perhaps staying away from church altogether, or if coming, spending the rest of his hours in reading what does the soul no good, or in idling its moments in a useless walk, or wishing it past altogether.

And what are other men ? one is a drunkard, another a glutton, a third a gambler, a card-player, another a duellist, a fifth a smuggler, and a sixth a pugilist ! “ O Lord God of Hosts, what is man, and what are the days of the years of his life, that Thou so regardest him ? ”

Does your conscience smite you for being guilty of one or more of these things ? can you say about any of them—“ That is my case ? ” Then you brought Christ from heaven, you are guilty of the murder that was this day committed on the hill of Calvary. And is it a slight thing to

be guilty of *such* blood? is it nothing to have been the cause of such a sacrifice, that you are so cold, so careless, so dead, so worldly, as if your sins were of no matter at all?

Perhaps some might say, It is too hard on people to expect so much. But when heaven and hell are at stake, and a soul—a never-dying soul—to be lost or saved, is it a time to consult men's fancies and ideas about what we shall press plainly and what not? Is it a time for speaking in *general* terms? is it not better to speak of each particular sin each may be guilty of, although it may disquiet many, simply because their own conscience smites them? I must speak the truth, as I expect to meet you before my God at the judgment-day; and it is of no use speaking the truth unless it reach the heart.

Do you, perhaps, shelter yourself from the charge of sins at all because you are not guilty of all of them? Then let me ask you, Are you guilty of *one* of them? If so, that one was enough to bring Christ from heaven. If you are not a drunkard, not a swearer, not a liar; but if you *are* a Sabbath-breaker, yet that *one* is enough to ruin you for ever.

And I should imagine no person is free of all the sins; I should imagine there are none, old

or young, whose conscience has not accused them of some. If so, every one has been the means of bringing Christ from heaven; all are guilty of His blood, all are standing on the verge of hell, and all are interested in the second point, the love of Christ in coming down at all.

δ. Were you to see a man sporting on the edge of a precipice with his eyes blinded, and every footstep placing him nearer to the rock which, if he falls, shall dash him to a thousand pieces; were you to see a mariner quietly compose himself to sleep upon the deck of a vessel which was rocking under the tempest within a hair's-breadth of the rock that must dash his vessel to pieces and plunge him inevitably into a watery grave, would you not think him mad? If a murderer lay in his condemned cell on the last night before his execution, while the damp of his prison wall was only equalled by the cold perspiration on his own aching brow; were the hours already hurrying on to the fatal day-dawn which should be *his last*; were the hum and murmur of the crowd without assembled to see him die, already striking on his terrified ears; and should a messenger on a sudden burst open his prison door and tell him of a pardon from his sovereign,—a full, free pardon for his crime,—and were that condemned criminal to turn back, and

composing himself on his dungeon floor, say, "No, I prefer my prison, my cell; I prefer my coming death; I will not accept my pardon;" when pardon was sent, and with it a rich inheritance, would you not call him mad? Would you not say his fear had turned his brain? Or, if not only—houses, land, and wealth,—all the luxuries that a kind and beneficent sovereign could heap upon a forgiven subject were offered, and were he still to refuse it all, would you not call him madder still? But more, were that sovereign to send word by his messenger that the punishment must be borne by some one, that the crime must have its punishment, and that therefore he had sent his only son to hang on the gallows for the murderer; that even at that moment the rope was fastening round his neck, and the multitude assembled to see him die instead of the murderer, him, the heir-apparent to the crown, the only son, the best beloved of the King,—were that condemned and now pardoned criminal to turn away and smile at the blessed news, and with a curse reject the king's son, or refuse to perform one last request he bade him, would you not think him more than mad? would you not call him the most ungrateful and worthless ingrate that ever breathed? would you not follow him from his prison door with execration on

his ingratitude when he passed the murdered body of his preserver with smiles of contempt? *Thou art the man!* Not the poor fool sporting on the precipice, not the mariner sleeping on the cracking deck, not the pardoned and ungrateful murderer, are equal in folly, blindness, and ingratitude to you.

Far more deeply than that criminal have you broken the laws of your heavenly Father; far more wonderfully has He ransomed you by the death of His Son; far more costly was the sacrifice; far more ungrateful is your unfeeling behaviour. You cannot, you dare not deny it. Look back on the past year, the past week, the past day, ay, the past hour too, while you have been laying on your neighbour faults which you wished not to own yourself, or felt irritated at hearing the truth; and then tell me, if all this be true of you, have you not neglected and despised Christ crucified?

Jesus died on Calvary,—you feel nothing from it; it is all a well-known, idle tale to you; Jesus died there for you,—you care no more for hearing that; Jesus deserved nothing, and yet He died; you deserved it all, and were a rebel against Him. It is all equally indifferent to your heart. Jesus loved you, loves you still: has it no influence on you? Cannot such a message of unparalleled, unknown forgiveness touch you,

even a little? Has the world, and self, and man, still more charms than the Cross of Christ? Oh consider how much is at stake!

But do you value His sacrifice? do you hate the sins that made Him bleed, and tremble beneath their fatal consequence? Then hear what He has done for you on this day. When on your mother's breast, you sinned; when a child at play, you sinned; in each year of advancing life you have added to the list. Each sin must have its awful punishment, and that punishment Christ has borne. You were guilty beyond all expression, so guilty that the flames of hell would hardly suffice to satisfy God's wrath; so guilty that angels tremble at it; and yet Jesus Christ has borne its punishment for you. If God had given us what we deserve, we should have been long since in hell, and nothing less than it is our desert at this moment. To what an end, then, should we have been consigned if Christ had not died! It was the punishment of that guilt He bore; but not only that, but when He died upon the cross He gave to us a power of His own which could make us not only safe from hell, but fit for heaven; He gave us such a robe as should hide our every stain from the angry eye of God, and make us shine like stars in the firmament. All this He won upon the cross. When God in-

carnate hung upon the bloody tree; when He who was insulted by the Roman, rejected by the Jew; when that blessed Saviour whom the rocking earth and the darkened sun bore witness to as the eternal Son of God; when He hung there He did so shew the goodness and perfection of God, that through those sufferings He has deserved for us all possible good. It is not enough to say He has saved us from hell; it is not enough to say—That death has rescued us from death; but far, far more, it has won for us unutterable joys, it has brought us everlasting happiness. And when ten thousand times ten thousand happy spirits shall in eternity hymn their Redeemer's praise, still they will feel that His suffering and obedience have deserved still more, and through all eternity they will sing their increasing happiness, the purchase of His death and the reward of His sorrows.

How bright, then, how infinitely bright, is the reward Christ has bought for us to-day! God grant we may finally have a share in His great glory. It is eternal sorrow He has saved us from, not earthly sorrow. Trouble and affliction we shall have here in abundance; that Christ never saved us from: sorrow and trouble we must still receive, as part of the punishment of sin. But

God's eternal wrath is taken away, carried off on to the head of His own Son, as the great conductor from mankind. The tempest gathered over Him, and the mighty thunderbolt of divine wrath scattered not its force over the human race, but fell all upon the innocent head of Christ, who received its whole weight. His cross burst asunder the clasped hands of eternal anger, and threw them wide open, that we might be received to His bosom.

Does any one say—"His death was not for me; I am not saved by it?" Then I can only say, It is your own fault. Free, most free, is the offer of mercy; all that will, may be saved. Do you believe in His all-sufficient merits? do you rest on nothing, nothing else? is He your only hope? Then Jesus died for you. You say, perhaps, your sins are still so great that while others may gain by His blood, you cannot. How much mistaken, then, are you! you are still speaking as if you deserved *anything* at His hand; you deserve nothing; your sins being great or small would not make you have a greater or less claim on Him; all, all He gives is free.

Remember one thing; He did not die to give you opportunity for sinning; He has not left you at liberty to sin, to follow your own vile inclina-

tions. If such is the use you make of His death, He did not die for you ; I mean, yours is no case that His death will save.

But oh, surely, if you have any regard for such a Saviour, you will daily hate sin more and more ; and especially to-day, you will deeply bewail them before God. It were shame to allow angels, who were never saved, to exceed you in your praises for salvation. Think of the happy souls who are at this moment thanking the Lamb for the blessings He has purchased for them ; think of the day when you shall be called to leave this lower scene ; remember you are not yet safe, you may yet be lost, eternally lost ; and value more than you do the death of Christ. A few more fleeting years, and you must be far away from where you now are. Happy are you if you have so gained a share in the merits of His death as to have your death-bed pillow made happy by His voice of love, and your parting moment made bright with a foretaste of heaven. Happy are you if, at the judgment after death, you can look around you on the awful scenery of a perishing world, and want no rock to cover you, no hill to hide you, but can look to Christ as your certain refuge, your covert from the storm. Proud to bear His

honoured name, through good report and ill report ; first in the rank of His disciples, however despised their fame or little esteemed among men ; crucified with your crucified Master, His in suffering, and far more His in glory,—“ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword ? As it is writen, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long ; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Would you have this your lot ? Then, since nothing but Christ can save you, nothing but His death and His suffering ; since you are dependent entirely on Him, as a little child in the hands of its parent ; since you can do nothing for yourself, let your prayer to-day and ever be :—“ By Thy Cross and Passion, good Lord, deliver me.”

SERMON VII.

CHRIST'S LAST WORDS. No. I.

Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do.

LUKE xxiii. 34.

THERE are no words like last words ; they hang about our ears like the phantoms of a dream do when we wake in the morning. We remember them ; and if they bid us do anything for one that is gone, we try and do it. And the more we love the dead, the more would we do what they asked. They are very sacred to us, though they may have been simple, and had not much in them ; we try and catch each syllable ; we lean over the lips of him who dies, and make out what he says, or what he means, with the same earnestness that we try and read letters written long ago. We have known what it is to be in a room where a man is dying—that awful stillness, that hard-drawn breath, the longing earnestness with which we catch each word and

syllable ; the anxious look we give, as if listening still, when we knew not all was over. We are so struck with those last words, that we mention them often to others who can have no interest in them ; they listen to them with respect, because they were *dying words* ; if they were very simple, we think they shewed much. Oh how much has been made of, how much have men clung to, —“I am happy, quite happy ;” “Jesus is all my trust,” or such expressions !

It is right they should interest us, because,—

a. We shall never hear that voice again ; while they were not *last words*, we felt we might expect more ; no more now. And words are very precious ; they tell us the mind and feeling of others, and when they are gone, they still live, and feel, and think ; but there are no *words* to tell us what they think, and feel, and wish. So we value last words.

β. Then there is no time when the situation of a man is so important as when he is dying ; it is the great moment of all his existence, and his words tell us what that state is, which we could not learn without he *told* us. So last words are full of interest.

γ. They have in them the beauty of being *the same* ; they tell us that to the last the person

speaking is the same being we have been with ; that he loves us to the last, he loves still to lean on us for support in this world.

8. Then, too, very often last words are full of interest from the particular thing said ; as when a dying man forgives an enemy, when he would otherwise rise at the last day with an unforgiven enemy, and that would be a dreadful thing ; and when a dying man with his last breath makes restitution.

So we value last words ; it is the last means of our knowing of the state of those we love, the last act of the connection of their soul and body.

Now I said all this is still more the case when we value and love very much the dying man. *Of course*, the dearer he is to us, the dearer his words. When children gather round a mother's pillow, or watch a father's dying words, what more full of force !

You will see I have mentioned four things chiefly why last words interest us. They are the last means of knowing the feelings of the dying ; they speak of his feelings in a most important moment ; they often are about particular duties when it is most urgent to have an opinion of them ; they tell us of a man's sameness of feeling towards us.

Now apply what I have said to our blessed Saviour's dying ; He made seven speeches on the cross :—should they not be arresting to us ? they were His *last words*.

1. They were the last means of hearing Him speak to the world—for after He rose He spoke particularly to the apostles.

2. They were the special moments of His ministry when He was saving the world.

3. They spoke certain great lessons.

4. They told us He was still the same in His feelings to us as He had ever been ; and as He was so up to that moment, He left us the surest hope He would be still, when He had gone away, and we should hear Him speak no more. So we should respect them and love them,—the last words of His agony, the voice of Him who is the Word of the Father speaking God's will.

Let us, then, through this holy season, consider the last words of our blessed Lord. Now His speeches are these :—

While the cross was laid out upon the ground of the hill—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Then the dying thief repented immediately after the nailing, and He said—"This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."

Then He looked round on the sad scene of sorrowers who wept upon the hill, and He saw His mother standing there, and He said, "Woman, behold thy Son."

Then, the dark hour of sorrow, when every human tie He had let wind round Himself was rent, His mother was gone, and He left alone, His Soul conscious of desolation, and His Body without His mother, and He cries, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

Then the bitter pain made Him thirst, and He said, "I thirst."

Then all seemed over, and He said, "It is finished."

And lastly, He bowed His Head, shewing that no one took His life, but that He gave it up, and laid His Head, as it were, upon His Father's breast, saying, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit."

In His life He was the pattern of all conduct; so in His death. And we may think we see in each thing He said a lesson for different Christian graces and works, in the first, forgiveness of injuries, then penitence, then the love and care of a son, then fear of God, then fulfilling His word, then perfect obedience, lastly *resignation*. Some shewed how perfectly

He was God, some how perfectly He was Man ;—
—God in taking the thief to paradise, and full,
powerful intercession for forgiveness ; Man, in
thirsting, and feeling lonely on the dark cold
hill.

1. But we will take the first cry on the cross
—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what
they do."

He had been judged by Pilate, and left the
court ; along the narrow street the Man of sor-
rows bent beneath the cross, the thieves with
Him, four soldiers with each, and one centurion
—thirteen in all ; along the road side were the
poor women from Galilee who had waited on Him.
It was three-quarters of a mile to Calvary. Simon
met them, and took the end of the cross, He
being faint ;—He had suffered much. They had
reached the hill, and the cross, as was the custom,
was laid upon the ground, and He stretched out
upon it. Then they began to nail Him to it. It
was at that moment He is thought to have uttered
the cry, "Father, forgive them, for they know not
what they do." The cry of pain turned into a
prayer. Pain makes us cry aloud ; it is well
when that cry is a prayer, and better still when
it is a prayer for those who give us sorrow.

So we see the men at their work, nailing Him ;

it was plain who He prayed for, who were meant by that "*them*:" they, who else? There were poor women there, it is true, who had walked a long way from Galilee to hear His trial, and had waited on His human wants, and had toiled along the streets after Him. They knew what they did well enough—weep for Him. And good reason had they. It would not mean *they*; no, nor yet the four who were advancing the hill-side slowly, the mother of Jesus, St. John, and the two Marys. His mother,—she knew she was come to see her Son die, as a mother would. Nothing strange there. Nor St. John, for his act needed no forgiveness; he had been all along with Christ, true to the last. No, nor yet the Magdalene; she had been forgiven. And they were calm too,—calm, quiet watchers,—weeping, that was all; and who would not weep at such a sight? No, it was the soldiers they were the '*them*,'—the four soldiers, one at one hand nailing, the other at the other; one at the feet, nailing the two feet one on the other, and the fourth holding the head, covered with blood from the thorns. They and the centurion who commanded—for these He prayed, and in them of course for all who gave Him to them, and who sinned in like manner.

Surely it was a most patient Lamb to lie there and pray, and all the while they pierced His most tender parts. So much for the persons prayed for.

2. Now for the prayer itself.

Surely in it we see His office as Mediator and Redeemer, forgiving sins. So the cross became a kingly throne, from which He spoke, an altar from which, as our High-Priest, He prayed for us; He became here like the bountiful creditor, who frankly forgave his debtor the ten thousand talents.

It was spoken to God as His Father. *His Father!* that seemed always in His mind, to do His Father's will; He never lost sight of that, for that He came into the world, and with that He died—"Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done;" "Father, forgive them;" "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit." He knew His Father loved the Son, and had given all things into His hands, and whatever was asked in the Son's name the Father would do, and He asked in the most prevailing name, as a son to a father.

Again, mark the true spirit of forgiveness, finding a reason to excuse the fault: "They know

not what they do ;" not adding to the greatness of His pardon, and free undeserved love, but taking from it by finding an excuse for their cruelty ! "They know not," they do it in ignorance.

Then see the effect of the prayer. He prayed for them who killed Him ; He prayed in the most prevailing hour, the hour of death and martyrdom, and the centurion was converted, His prayer was heard ; one of them, the leader and chief of them for whom He prayed, was forgiven by being converted at the foot of the very cross, on the very hill where he stood.

Such is the history of the prayer, His first saying on the cross, which comes to us with so much force and beauty.

And now of the lesson of forgiveness which we learn from it. How much we need to learn forgiveness from Him, we who are so imperfect in our forgiveness.

From its circumstances we learn much.

1. We can forgive when we have not our actual rights, or what we think our just rights, assailed. He took no thought of them. His right at least was to have some true charge brought and proved against Him ; He had none. They brought two false witnesses, neither did their

witness agree together. None had more wrongs than He, yet He freely, fully forgave: No consideration of personal right can be a reason for our not forgiving; your right, as far as regards those things which law gives you, you may enjoy; but your spirit must be full of forgiveness towards him who would infringe it, or it is no Christian love.

2. Again, men say, I will forgive after I am out of my annoyed state; give me time. No—He forgave while the nails pierced His hands, and the beam of the cross drove the thorns more deeply into His brow. No delay. Forgive now, for who can tell what may be on the morrow? If you die without having forgiven, you will meet an unforgiven enemy at the judgment-day, and that will be a hard thing to get over; for as the tree falls so must it lie; as far as your souls go, the pillow of death rests on the throne of judgment, the last breath of one goes before the first scene of the other. As you forgive, you will be forgiven; and in the grave you cannot forgive, though you be side by side with your enemy for a thousand years, grave by grave.

3. Then men are satisfied with saying they forgive, and feeling they forgive, and do nothing to shew it. Men often say, "I can forgive, but

never forget." That only means, "I can forbear, but never forgive; I can hold back my hand from injuring my neighbour, but cannot forgive him in my heart." You must do more than forbear; you must shew by your act that you forgive, and that act may involve self-denial. So did He; He died for those He prayed for; He shewed His pardon by shedding His blood. We must shew our forgiveness by inconvenience to ourselves.

4. Then, pray for them. It seems an easy thing to pray for another; it *seems* to cost us little; but *it is* a greater work than it seems to be. It is a work of no little difficulty; it is not simply prayer for them that we shall use if we follow Christ: we shall live so as to make our prayer availing; we should give up insincerity, we should give up pleasure, to make our prayer for our foes more holy, and that is hard to the flesh. Our Saviour's prayer was no common prayer, it was wrung from patient agony, it was the voice uttered over His Father's cup; it was because He was so suffering, so obedient a Son that His prayer was so availing, so sure, so blessed, for His enemies. "God heareth not sinners, but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth His will, him He heareth."

Such is your duty of forgiveness for your ene-

mies, as we learn from His lips who was our pattern.

5. Again, make the *least* of *their* fault, not the *most* of *your* kindness. Some men make less of the difficulty of forgiving their enemy by talking much of it, by letting others know how bad the person is whom they forgive, and how kind they are who forgive. There is not much pain to flesh in this. The work of forgiveness must be a secret work, unobtrusive, only seen by God; involving the will to see everything that can be pleaded to excuse our enemy's conduct. "They know not what they do." I pray for their pardon, for they are acting ignorantly. How unlike our forgiveness is this !

This speech on the cross is the epitome of Christian forgiveness. The seed in which is enwrapped to the end of time the vast outspreading tree of charity.

SERMON VIII.

CHRIST'S LAST WORDS, No. II. THE THIEF.

To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise.—LUKE xxiii. 43.

To no person who was by the cross was that cross and that scene of Calvary so important as to the thief. If we think of those who were with Jesus when He died, we think of him whom He pardoned and took with Him to paradise. The scene of the cross did much for him; it was the means of his repentance, and of his passing, and being fit to pass, into the other state. Now these two things, repentance, and the fitness to pass into another state of being to that we are in in this world, are accomplished for *us* very much through trial, as they were for *him* through the cross.

Many things connected with the words of Christ to the thief suggest thoughts about the intermediate state between our life and our change to heaven or hell. I will not do more, than briefly mention them.

What seems true of this is briefly as follows. When we die, we have every reason to believe we still go on, without any ceasing of our consciousness, into a new state of things altogether; that that state of things, or place, is called paradise, a place of departed spirits; that, from what we can gather, there are two places, for the good and bad, which we learn partly from the expression of Judas going "to his own place," as the place of Judas after death would not, probably, be the place of St. Peter or the saints of Jesus; we find also that this place will be one where the spirits will be separate from the body, from three passages especially: 2 Cor. xii., where St. Paul speaks of his being taken up to paradise, "whether in or out of the body" he could not tell. Again, he speaks of being "absent from the body" and being "with Christ," which cannot mean heaven, because we shall then have the body. And again, "to depart and be with Christ" he speaks of as being "far better" than being in the flesh. The same lesson we learn from our Lord's words to the thief, which, taken in the meaning in which the Jews of that day took them,—which surely must be their meaning,—refer to a state between this life and the judgment. And again,

the parable of Lazarus,—which is also to be explained by the opinions of Jews in the day our Saviour spoke of it,—of angels carrying our souls to the place of waiting. As to our employments there, St. Paul tells us they are such as are so glorious and blessed as to pass our understanding, such as may not be uttered or spoken. Into this state it was that the thief went with Jesus, and from the miseries of the pain of dying he passed peacefully into the quiet waiting of paradise.

Now since our state after death,—after the judgment as well as immediate,—are matters of very great importance to us, and of so great interest,—most likely every thoughtful person has often cast in his mind what will be his condition there, and while waiting on the death of others, has paused in the awful stillness of their last scene, to think that at this moment the soul has gone into another state; it knows *everything*, all the great truths we have talked of together; and where is it gone? what is its condition? one moment has made such a change! we are left amid the scenes in which he *was*, and, struggle as we may, we cannot pierce one shadow of the clouds which have rolled between his parting spirit and our own estate.

It is a striking thought, that man, with all his

discoveries, cannot know, nor ever has known, anything beyond the last breath, though millions of every age and place have passed through it, and have left behind them those who would give worlds to pierce the shadow.

But no ; death is as a river, and the dying step into it, and we attend them to the shore, and see them enter ; and we try to follow them as they cross with our longing eyes, but a cloud hangs sullenly over the water. We know there is another shore ; we see it not ; many are the groups which hover round the banks ; but none have known anything, nor will they, till they cross themselves. Many are the figures along the nearer shore of that stream, but they all return as they came.

Now it is probable, from what we do know, that—

The spirit of a man passes at once into this middle state ; that there is no suspension of his condition ; i. e., he goes on with the same thoughts, and feelings, and memory which he had on his deathbed. He goes into the one place as he left the other ; he still remembers the things he has done, the people he has lived with, the friends he loved ; their cries perhaps are still sounding, like sounds we dream of, but do not really hear, but think

we do. He sees their faces where he is, just as we see faces in a dream ; how clearly, how distinctly we see them ; they pass before us, and we love them, or are indifferent about them, as the case may be ; but it is not a real seeing, it is only a remembering ; the mind keeping the picture the eye saw. So we shall *go on* remembering when we die. We know we can do this now without the help of the body, because we can think about people and things for hours without seeing them, and yet they are clearly before our mind, clearer than if we saw them ;—I say clearer, because the idea we have of things in those thoughts, or in dreaming, is brighter than they are to the eye ; we forget their faults and remember their beauties, and, added to that, we have the ideas we had about them added to what we remember of them.

If a man says, by way of objection,—But even before death our memory and reason are very often so weakened as to be sometimes good for nothing ; I answer, That is the effect of the body, which hangs like a weight upon the soul, and is the cause of many of its weaknesses ; and when the body is taken away, and the soul is released, it will be able to act much more clearly and well. This we know by

experience in sickness ; when we recover we are the same as before. And if a man say that the remembering the sorrows of life, and the estate, and often the afflictions, of those we left behind, will not let us be happy there ; I say that we should remember that is not our state of perfect peace, it is our place of *waiting* ; in the same way as that in this life, the rest we have in Jesus is able to carry us above all earthly considerations. So we there shall have such trust in Him as to give us peace.

And this brings me to my next point,—our state there of happiness or misery. Now for the good, most likely, their happiness will be the rest of a very quiet conscience, and the recollection that they have trusted all to Jesus Christ ; they will remember that they died in full trust in Him, that He died to save them, and that if they fully repented they have no reason to fear. So we shall expect His coming ; and there will be this difference between our feeling about His coming then and our state to what there is now,—we shall never have Satan to tempt us there, there he will not be admitted ; so there will be no sad doubts whether Christ accepts us or not, but we shall be quiet, happy spirits, waiting till He comes. No wicked tempter to torment us ; he may

long to come in, but good angels will keep him out; his dark thoughts may not come there. There, too, we shall have no bodily infirmities, which hinder our souls here, and cast doubts and shadows over our minds, which need not be at all; there we shall have no infirm body; no reason to fear for the future. Now, in our best day, our weak nature will say to us, "there are many trials and temptations yet, how will you pass through them? There we shall have nothing more to dread; all will be safe for ever. Our feeling will be, "I know in whom I have believed, and that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day." There, too, the course of a wicked world, which we now have about us, and which disturbs us much, and sometimes makes us doubt, will not disturb us. We shall be among quiet, happy spirits, who are all waiting for Jesus, and have nothing to make them doubt. Of course some men, before they die, have not the same peace, and calmness, and assurance as others, because they have not served Jesus so faithfully or so long as some others, who have clearer views; and so perhaps, as God sees fit to deny so full a peace to all equally, He may do it there too, and spirits may be blest with dif-

ferent degrees of *absolute certainty*. As we think in heaven there are different degrees of happiness, i.e. different forms of enjoyment, so there may be too in Paradise: as we have served Christ, will be our power of enjoying His approach. But we do at least believe this, that in that state, if we have died in full trust in Christ, we shall there well remember it, and be comforted by the thought.

And there we shall expect Christ. There will be no wicked world to draw us away; rather, we shall joy at His coming; like the souls under the altar, we shall say, "Lord, how long?"

Such are the good departed. Of their employments we cannot tell; we know they see great and glorious things, which it is not lawful for a man to utter; how spirits mingle with spirits; how one knows another; how there are ways of knowing things far more powerful than sight, and sound, and touch; we *must* wait to know. We know there are rapturous visions there, perhaps of Jesus' love, and of His coming to judgment, and to take His own, which the wicked one and sin cannot destroy. We know in this world it is often strange, the way in which one spirit can have intercourse with another,

and seems to know things with another, quite apart from the body.

But of the wicked dead,—they go to *their own* place, probably where their conscience is awfully alive, very keen ; where every sin is remembered, and all guilt is known ; where no vain excuse is able to be thought of, or any of those ways of obtaining comfort which men so easily find in the body ; no sleep to forget, no bodily pleasure to drown its voice ; but one long waking of active thought, which burns like a fire ; each opportunity of good neglected remembered with regret, and the coming of Christ looked forward to with dread and awe ; a recollection of sin, and all its guilt, without the possibility of rest or hiding. That is *bad enough*. Feeling how blessed it would be to repent,—but they cannot,—it is too late ; waiting for the judgment, knowing they must be condemned, yet unable to pray, unable to turn to God ; all over all opportunity, for ever. That is awful to think of ! Here we can forget, there we cannot ; here we can repent, at least look forward to it, as the bad sometimes do ; there never ; each sin will be like a load, each lie will burn with the scorch of a fire ; each prayerless day, each oath, each broken Sabbath, will cling to the soul like

the grasp of death, which cannot be shaken off. No night-sleep, no power of religion, no intoxicating forgetfulness, will be there, but awaiting in hourly agony for the judgment; viewing things in awful calmness and quiet, the very truth dreadful, and surrounded by other spirits more wicked than themselves. God preserve us from that dreadful place of waiting.

To this place, viz. the first, or paradise, the penitent thief went with Jesus. *There*, probably, at this moment, wait all those who have served the Lord here; the spirits of all, from Adam downwards; their joys at expecting Him great beyond measure; He is their Lord whom they have served, their Shepherd, who, having sought them amid the paths of the wilderness, has brought them home rejoicing. There, in quiet, far from strife and tumult, they calmly think of Jesus. Let us learn calmness too, and wait as quietly for His coming or calling.

What they know of our state we cannot tell. They may be aware of what we are doing, and anxiously expecting our sincere devotion to God. At least they remember us. If the rich man in the parable was indeed waiting in that place of painful expectation, he remembered his family's sins.

Some of your dead are there, I trust, in the calm of paradise. If they are anxiously expecting your arrival, disappoint them not. Let not one of your family be absent,—all be there, waiting for Christ. Prepare now; you have but a little time,—a few more years and days; let your decreasing store on earth increase your number there. Imagine the joy of passing from your trials here, entering paradise, and finding there the spirits of those you loved on earth, and mingling at once with them in that deep quiet of affection which we sometimes know here, the communion of kindred spirits. We know that “without us they are not made perfect;” so we are told they wait to go *with us* to heaven. We shall enter that happy land together, whose joys will be ten-fold increased above the joys of paradise. “It hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive what God hath prepared for them that love Him.” They wait as anxiously as we for the return of Christ. Never count them lost to you, but only removed a little space, and enjoying a fairer, sweeter hope than Satan and the world will let *you* have.

Remember, through the cross the thief entered paradise; and through trial,—perhaps a last sickness, long and lingering,—you must enter

too. But reject it not ; trial and sickness will be but preparing you for leaving the world more calmly. All the saints have gone there through this trial,—shall you be excepted ? For ourselves, for those we love in Christ, we “sorrow not as men without hope.”

SERMON IX.

LESSONS OF THE CROSS.

1. BEARING IT DAILY; 2. ITS SCHOOL; 3. ITS DEATH.

We preach Christ crucified.—1 COR. i. 23.

THERE are many things we think of when we speak of the cross of Christ. It has many lessons, and we might dwell long upon them all. We may look closely into it, and learn much every way; the more we look the more we see. If we look closely into a deep sky, before it is quite dark, one by one stars come out to our eye; the more deeply we look the more they seem to come:—they were there before. So at the cross, look well at it, dwell on it, and one by one its holy lessons will come out, till it will read us a long tale, such as nothing else in the world will.

It is what we have to carry daily, and that is a great lesson for many. Where shall we learn what daily crosses are? Go to the cross of Good Friday, and learn there.

It teaches and changes all. Go and learn that of those who were at it, or had to do with it. St. Peter, the Virgin Mary, the Centurion, all learnt a lesson there.

It is a death-bed lesson : all we shall suffer at death was suffered there ; He went through all. It is a true picture of our death ; there were parting friends, the thirst of dying, the last words, the darkness of mind,—all.

The cross—there too is our hope, our only hope, that which, borne well, will bear us ; the light burden, weighing down yet bearing up.

Let us take it in some of these senses, and learn our lesson at it. By evening on Good Friday the cross was still and silent : His body was taken down ; the thirst, and agony, and noise were over ; all were gone to the town, save a few who watched,—the two Marys at the grave, St. Peter perhaps weeping still somewhere alone : there may have been a straggler on the hill. Let us go to its silent sadness, and read our lesson there, scan it well, think over its other deep lessons.

a. Its lesson of bearing. “ If any man will come after Me, let him take up his cross daily and follow Me.” Here is a plain statement ; we are to bear His cross. To know what we are to

bear we must see what He bore. It is plain that the lesser trials of life, not the greater, are meant ; they are those which come every day.

Then it is things which do occur every day that are meant by the words *daily bear the cross*. The greater trials do not come *daily*. We are to find our means, our way, our opportunity of seeing God, in little daily things ; it is in these that we shew our love to Christ.

1. Feelings of sickness, pain, and weakness, are to us as daily feelings ; we find these at the cross ; pain enough there : “they might tell all His bones ;” weakness,—so weak He could not carry His cross. We all have these feelings at times, and shall have till we die. They are part of the cross you bear with Him, your *means* of following Him. We may imitate His feeling towards them,—“If it be possible let these pass from me ; if I can do without them, if I can reach heaven without extreme bodily weakness, let me ; nevertheless, not my will but Thine be done.” Do not murmur at them, do not be anxious about them ; if they are needful for you to reach God, love them, God will help you bear them till the end. The slightest pain, the least feeling of bodily weakness, *is* part of your cross. Some fret at trifles who *would* bear great loss.

Take care lest you do this; perhaps you are not loving your cross if you do.

Then, too, separations from friends, and being obliged to give up, perhaps daily, some little leaning on their human love. We are called to this daily; the cross had enough of that. There were friends there of His—His mother; the disciple He loved; Mary who had ministered to Him, all which reminded Him of human help—His mother, who had borne Him on her breast a child; Mary Magdalene, who had often ministered to Him; St. John who had heard His secret words: none could approach Him then; His mother's breast could not bear Him then; they might stand and watch, that was all.

So separations, going on alone, not being able always to lean on human love; these are all daily trials, parts of His cross we daily bear. Men often resist these trials because they are little, because they say they need not be, their enjoyments, are innocent. They are not little, if Christ bore them; not needless, if they bring us *one step* nearer Him; not innocent pleasures, if they make us love themselves more than we do the sharing of Christ's cross.

Daily irritations of temper, unsettling of our quiet, rising in the morning in perfect peace and

confidence with others, and finding them before night untrue or fretful,—these are daily trials. We always long for settled ease ; we like to feel that when fretfulness in another is placed aside it is placed aside *for ever*. But this is part of our cross,—to be uncertain, unsettled, to be unable to fix all our affections on another without fear of failure. Go to His cross ; we learn it there ; He had friends most uncertain, forsaking and denying Him, and that when they promised to be true and firm. And that was not all, but adding to His suffering by acting heedlessly and on impulse.

Then, too, finding men do not improve as we expect they will ; finding others disappoint us in the way they turn out is trying. All this is trying, but it is our cross. Go to the cross, and find it there. His own failed Him strangely, fell off, disappointed Him, were not what they should be, quarrelled in their last journey—that to Gethsemane. This is part of your daily cross ; cast it not off, bear it with Christ ; be like him of Cyrene ; bear it with Him, do not expect less than He found.

Yes, the pathway of our daily trials leads to the cross, they are of the cross ; we, bearing them, are His members, sharing the heavy

weight ; one family following their head, and finding their lot with Him for ever.

Would we could value them more ! would we did not resist them as we do, and shake them off ! Do not look out for great trials, learn to bear and love less ones. One day may have more of Christ's cross in it than we find in a year of quiet things at home ; in *little* things more of His cross than in scenes the world most looks at.

Such is the cross's first lesson.

I said it was the school of character ; it taught men truth about themselves, shewed them what they *really* were, undeceived them, opened their eyes, brought home their faults, made them different men ; like trials do us, our daily trials. So if we would see what our daily cross does for us, see what the cross did for these.

1. *St. Peter.* It taught him a good lesson. He was mistaken about himself ; he was very warm-hearted, full of feeling, full of burning love, like many of us are ; feeling every thing keenly, deeply, when talked to ; he thought he was strong in good things, thought he could surely act up to all he felt. But he did not know himself ; he was mistaken. Where was he set right ? at the cross ; that set Him right. He failed,

swore, was afraid, lied, denied, gave up, when it came to the point. The cross taught him. So will trials, bearing the cross, shew you your true character, set you right, convince you, correct you. See how you bear them.

2. *The blessed Virgin Mary.* She had had a child who never did amiss, foretold by an angel before birth, most holy. She thought she might do as she would with Him. There was no harm in the thought; it was natural, quite. She loved Him,—why should she not have Him, be with Him? She tried sometimes; at the feast, asked Him to make the water wine; at the Temple, wanted Him to come home; sought Him outside the crowd; never could quite learn her lesson till the cross, *that* taught her; she was silent there, quiet; asked no question, did not seek Him any more; no “Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing;” no standing outside till He came out—seeking Him; no asking Him to do wonders *then*; she stood there sorrowing; she was learning her lesson, the cross taught it her; she could see Him there till He died, see the last life-drop, but that was all, could not go near Him; no more going “down to Nazareth to become subject to her.” She had another home He made for her. She learnt her lesson at the

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mised kingdom now? She had mistaken it; she understood now what He meant by "the baptism I am baptized with," "the cup I drink of,"—a baptism of blood, a cup of sorrows! She was silent; she had learnt her lesson, no earthly honours for the people and loved ones of Christ. So you, in daily trials, in your daily crosses, learn the same. They teach you that the servants of Christ must expect little of this world's greatness; they teach you the *true* nature of His kingdom,—learn it well.

4. Then, too, *Mary Magdalene* had her lesson there. She had been a sinner, a great one; He had forgiven her, forgiven her all, bid her go in peace; and she loved Him, loved much; and her delight was to be with Him, to wash His feet with her tears; to be with Him, ministering to Him. But even she had a lesson to learn, and that lesson was at the cross. She could not have Christ always; they would take away her Lord. She had, perhaps, years of penitence to spend without Him, *then* to be with Him for ever.

So we sometimes think, when we have begun to follow Christ, that we are quite safe, may enjoy the spiritual comforts of religion *always*. *Not so*: we shall be with Him always in heaven.

The cross you have to bear as penitents will often bid you stand away awhile from the full joy of His presence, who yet is your only hope. So those on the hill; they could not always see Him, even *dying*, for the dark hours came, but they could hear Him, and were near Him, that was enough; they must wait for the full joy of His presence. If you often find it hard to be at peace; if you feel you are striving all you can to lead a life of penitence and sorrow, and yet are often downcast, doubting and in shadows, shrink not, it is part of your cross, it was part of His; it is the lesson you have to learn at Calvary.

5. *St. John* learnt his lesson there; the cross was *his* school too; even he had something to be taught. His deep, pure, calm love, must lose awhile the object, and must learn to love the work, to obey; must lose Christ awhile, and take care of her who was left alone. Sometimes men of very deep, calm affection for good things, who have no great struggles with sin, forget that their denial *must* come somewhere, that they must suffer for Christ, and shew their love by working rather than gazing.

So learn your lesson of the cross; your cross, to-day's cross, will teach you yourself, be your school, discipline you, shew you what you are.

But another lesson still from to-day's cross, His who to-day died. It was His scene of death, and part—perhaps the hardest part—of our cross will be dying. And each suffering of His is wonderfully like what men suffer who die, that He might be in all points like as we are. Let us take it to dwell upon in our minds, that when we have to die we may find a comfort in remembering that He had each suffering of death, and we would count it a privilege, a blessing, to bear the same.

What are the sufferings of death?

Bidding farewell to all we have loved. He made a feast, and called those He loved together, and bid them farewell there, said His last advice there. So do we; we take our last communion with those round us we love, the last time we meet together, the last time we eat together, till heaven; He, too, would not eat it again till in His Father's kingdom.

Sometimes it is a passing pain to a man to think that the things he has loved will be his no more, that they will pass to others. Before His dying eye His raiment was divided, and His coat given to another.

Often the last nights of life are sleepless and restless, hard breathing and fear make them so.

So was His ; a "cold" night, without sleep, in the garden of Gethsemane.

Often the great suffering of death is thirst, —thirst, which makes men frequently ask for moisture. We see it, their tongue is dried up. So was His, like a potsherd ; He said, "I thirst."

Faintness, utter weakness is often a great suffering in death, so weak we can scarce bear a feather's weight. So with Him, He could not carry His cross He was so weak.

Dark thoughts will disturb us, thoughts of doubt and uncertainty. He had His moment of darkness—"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

We shall sometimes see the kindest friends sink in weariness and sleep beside our death-bed pillow, worn out with sorrow. So did He ; they *could* not watch one hour.

Some sufferings we shall *not have* which He had. We shall have, God willing, our own round us to bear our dying head, to hear our last wish, to tend our slightest want. Not so He ; His mother could not bear His Head ; the cross and crown of thorns held that.

"Was ever sorrow like unto His sorrow?"

SERMON X.

LESSONS OF THE CROSS.

And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto Him : among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children.—MATT. xxvii. 55, 56.

WE were learning lessons at the cross, and have spoken of the lesson the Virgin Mary was taught there,—to lose her only Son, as God the Father willed ; and we learnt from that to hold all our affections with this feeling,—“ Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.” Affections towards those whom God has given us are good, all of them ; but they must be in Christ, we must live in Him ; when He bids us we must yield them ; when they interfere with our devotion to Him we must place them aside, we must meet them with, “ Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business ? ”

Such we learn about human affection at the cross.

Trials, as I said before, do teach us how *real* things are. We live in two worlds, in two sets of things,—the things which have to do with the common course of this life, and those which have to do with motives, actions, and promises with regard to another. The first is, of course, that in which we feel to live most; it is that which worldly-minded men live in altogether; it is the subject of the customs of the world, and even those who struggle against the world soon become bound down by these customs. The body is the object of the one, the soul of the other. Now men who are mere formalists have no real conscious connection with the system of things which have to do with the soul; they are obliged to have something to do with it by compulsion, not of their own choice or will; they attend to certain forms of religion, more because others have struck them out for them than that they enter into them. Now even the good find a difficulty in living in the spiritual world; they are so taken up with things which meet their eye and sense. Trial makes these things real; trial tells men that there will be something better than the things of this life and of this world, or we must go mad, or despair, or forget altogether; trial shews us that as our sorrows

are about things, as it were, deeper than the surface and outside of the things of life, so must there be a help and grace to bear them greater than this world gives or the body possesses ; trial shews us whether we have really been living on these things, or only professing to do so, or thinking we do so ; trial is a bringing us by force into the other world, the other system ; it is the drawing aside the veil, and giving us the choice of taking a true view of things, or trying to forget everything, and live like brutes. Men choose differently. So trial is our searcher, our test of character, as the cross was theirs.

1. We read that at the cross, among those who beheld afar off, was the mother of Zebedee's children ; she came to learn her lesson there, and it was a striking one. Now there is something very remarkable about the mention of this name here. Names are mentioned, as it would seem, in a slight manner in holy Scripture, but, when we come to look into them, they seem very full of force, though they are inserted without any remark from which to stop and gather the lesson.

She is mentioned once before, and what a lesson we learn from her second mention, at the cross ! "Then came to Him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping Him,

and desiring a certain thing of Him. And He said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto Him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy right hand, and the other on the left, in Thy kingdom. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask." We hear no more of her till that other mention of her at the cross,—“There stood afar off . . . the mother of Zebedee's children.”

Now what is the history of this woman? Her husband was a poor fisherman on the waters of the sea of Galilee, as poor as any class of men among the people of the country of Galilee. They had two sons, James and John, both following their father's occupation upon the waters of the lake. They were probably very obscure men, little known or noticed among the multitude; yet—who can tell God's purposes?—one was to die, to be the first martyr apostle; the other to be “He whom Jesus loved.” Such were they before He came, dwellers in their father's home, and their mother with them. The Jews were expecting the Messias; He was to come at this time. A solitary stranger appeared on the shores of the lake; He said He was the Messias; He could do wonders, and the people followed Him. He said He had a kingdom where want

and trouble would never come. James and John follow Him; they forsake all. Mark the simplicity of the tale: it was after the temptation. "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And He saith unto them, Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed Him. And going on from thence, He saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and He called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed Him."

This is the whole; no other reasons or motives are given. Now the probability is that they saw in this stranger something striking; that they were good men, waiting for the Messiah; that they had a secret inward impulse urging them to follow Him. But still their knowledge of Him was imperfect; they had a mysterious feeling about Him, a love and a fear; this shewed itself often afterwards; when He calmed the sea, — "What manner of man is this, that even the

winds and the sea obey Him !” Again, “ When they saw Him on the water they were afraid.” Again, “ Wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel ?” Again, the words of our text. Again, their strange fear in Gethsemane, and still more their distrust about the resurrection. All this shews at first an imperfect knowledge, but by degrees a gradual love, and fear, and knowledge ; they knew not His Spirit, and they wanted to burn the cities of Samaria. They had an idea they were doing what was right in following Him, that He would give the expected kingdom, and they would be great and happy. “ What shall we have, therefore ?” was often their motive and feeling. Now if they had these mixed feelings at first about Christ, how likely it is that their mother, who knew far less of Him, who was very poor, who had her sons’ interest closely at heart, should have had still more worldly views of His nature and kingdom ? She found her sons had joined a great Man, one who made fair promises of giving them great places in a kingdom of His He was soon to have ; she foresaw their worldly success ; she heard from time to time of their greatness, and power, and courage ; and kept, as a mother will, the interest of her sons at heart. She sought out the holy

stranger ; her sons brought their mother to Him ; she fell down and besought Him to give her sons chief places in His kingdom. Probably they were unwilling to ask it themselves ; they knew too much of Him, and felt too much mystery about His kingdom, to ask it themselves. But they had sufficient ambition to let her, and she did it boldly, she was acted on by a mother's will, bent on her sons' earthly success, forgetful of all else ; making great sacrifices to purchase that she would not mind the jealousy of the others, or the possible rebukes of Christ ; she had her sons' worldly interest before her, and she would not lose it by any fear or shrinking.

And now she is at the cross ; and what does she learn there ? A different tale. 'There hung the future King, bleeding and dying ! Where now her sons' success ? where the kingdom now ? Was it, after all, a King of sorrows they followed ? His crown, of thorns, His robe, of blood, a reed His sceptre ? was that His promised kingdom ? Truly she came to learn a good lesson. All her ambitious hopes were fled, all gone. At least to her, His cause was one of sorrow, shame, and death ; and there stood her son, quietly watching at the cross, and another given to His care, one who brought no earthly

gain or greatness. Hers was a lesson for a worldly-minded mother ; she learnt the lesson at the cross. So she stood afar off, beholding the passing away of her bright dreams, her hopes of future greatness ; her sons would leave the path of earthly success ; their greatness would turn to sorrow and trial, their success would be a work of earthly sorrow ; one was to die under a cruel king. The cross taught her a lesson she would not well forget.

It does the same for us. How many worldly-minded parents are there among us, fathers and mothers who think of nothing else but their sons' earthly interest. Trial teaches them a lesson ; the day of trouble comes ; they see their children in distress and woe, and they cannot help them. They learn that something more than the world must be their support ; that they have never calculated right, when they made religion for their children a mere stepping-stone to earthly greatness. If God truly loves them, if He really takes them as His own, He will bring down their high thoughts, He will bring them to subjection : He will throw His robe of blood across them, and stain all their raiment. His people are not to seek distinctions here, nor parents who come to Him to seek worldly great-

ness for their children. If they be His, He will bring them to the cross, and shew them that sight; He will give them trial, and shew them there what their true position is, that religion is not only earthly gain, that the inheritors of heaven are sorrowers here, the children of God are despised of men, the members of Christ are separate from the world. How many a mother has first learnt this at their sons' death-bed, for which they have toiled for years! How often have they been taught that one hour's advice in the way to heaven, one hour's prayer for them, had been worth years of hard labour for worldly glory!

St. John probably had learnt his lesson before his mother. He had seen much; two years with Christ had done much for him. The last night at the supper, with his head upon His bosom, and the sad scene of Gethsemane, had told him a different story. I speak this chiefly to persons who wish to fear God. The wicked often have their prosperity here—God lets them. It is the good who are often tempted to be thus worldly; they must learn at the cross, learn by trial the true nature of Christ's kingdom. The greatness of those who follow Christ will *not* be of this world.

“She stood afar off,” for she must have been

struck with the sad sight, struck deeply with her own mistake. When men are first taught to know themselves by trial, they draw back, and gaze with wonder and shame, not liking to draw near.

2. Again, there was Mary Magdalene; she too was there, come to learn her lesson. And what was that? She had been a great sinner; there she came to learn the price of sin; she had been forgiven, she came to see how she had been forgiven,—she had gone in peace from His feet, she came to learn of what nature her peace was to be—very chastened. She came to see the body she had anointed for the burial. She had been a great sinner, and she came to know the price of sin, “its wages;” they cost a life, and they were worth a death of pain, a bleeding brow, and a worn-out body. When we have committed a sin, and a trial comes upon us, we are unable to approach God with confidence; we then learn the distance sin makes between God and us. In days of prosperity we scarcely know this; we think lightly of sin, or we get into worldly ways of viewing sin, and merely talk of its earthly consequence; in trouble we measure it, we understand it.

Again, she saw how she had been forgiven. Then how deep must *His* love have been! Each

one of us Christ has as much individually died for, as much individually pardoned. We learn our lesson of salvation at the cross, the price of sin, what our guilt has cost. But the chief lesson we learn with her on Calvary is the result of pardoned sin. She went in peace; but whither? He said to her at the feast before His death, "Go in peace:" and what was her first journey, her first going? To the cross on Calvary, that was her journey of peace; to look at Him pierced, that was her first sight of peace; to hear Him cry, that was her first sound of peace,—a very chastened one; what the world would call very sad "going in peace,"—the peace the "world cannot understand"—no, "nor take away," thank God. She learnt her lesson, of what her peace in this world was to be, at the cross. And what the cross taught her, trial teaches us,—what our peace is; not merriment, nor prosperity, nor forgetfulness; but calm, quiet waiting,—waiting within reach of sounds and cries of woe; standing on a very sorrowful hill, a hill of shadows, dark shadows, closing in and veiling the hope of eternity. For what did she hear there? "This day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit." So there was a state of glory

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coming, one where that Body would not bleed, nor that Spirit mourn ; where He would be on His throne. But men do mistake the peace of Christ ; they will think it is freedom from all sorrow, perfect tranquillity at once, an end of trial. It is far from it ; it is a very chastened peace, one with heaven for its aim, not its earthly estate. Many would not have much wish to make this world their own, for Calvary was so sorrowful ; yet there was certain hope, for she was pardoned, and in it all she was near *Him*, and near Him in His sorrow, which supported her.

What trial was to her, trial is to us ; it shews us what our peace is ; whom He loveth He chasteneth. And if a man were to think he would be free of all troubles by serving Christ, would he not be mistaken ? would he not find, and that soon, that if he cast in his lot with Christ he must be with Him on the stormy waters and in the pathless desert ? Does he not find it a gradual weaning from the world ? that Christ will not let His servant cling here ; He sees his roots fasten themselves round each little clod of earth, and in mercy He loosens them before they are torn up. Is it not well He should do so ? Trial shews us that our glory is not here. Though it must be a subdued peace here ; yet it

is "perfect" in its way, we are content to bear it, we know it is good. However dark the hill, it is by the cross, and that is all we care for. So in the three hours of darkness, though all was quiet, He was there, and she heard Him speak ; and in the morning of the resurrection saw Him face to face ; and so, may He grant it, shall we.

SERMON XI.

VOICES FROM THE PASSION.

Come unto Me.—MATT. xi. 28.

WE are drawing towards the end of Lent ; the narrow pathway which leads up the hill of Calvary leads to the cross,—a narrow road, as we have often said before, and rough ; however, it has been a time of self-denial, and grieving over sin.

Who of us have made it narrow, and steep, and rough ? Have we not made it too easy a time ? Do we not all make our way to heaven, our path of religion, far too easy ?

Are we not shutting our eyes to sin, getting over the real danger of our position ? We are too kind to ourselves ; we excuse our own faults when we would not excuse the faults of others ; we do not punish and check ourselves for the very faults we are so ready to check in others. We

shall wish we had been more severe with ourselves one day, when all comes out, when we cannot deny a single charge.

But, however, we are coming to the end of Lent, coming near to Passion-week, and our blessed Saviour's sufferings are very near us; we are beginning to think much of them: we are coming within sight of the Man of sorrows, we are almost sprinkled with His blood, and His exceeding bitter cry is reaching our ear. Are we ready for that sacred week,—Holy-week, the week of sorrows? Have we left the world enough to be ready for that? The scenes of the world have nothing to do with Him; if we live in the world's ways we shall not be able to feel His sorrow or understand His grief. It is not in eating and drinking and making merry that we get ready to be at His cross. When our brother is dying we feel that we had rather not be mixed up with the busy world, for it unfits us for his death-bed. If we are to hear the last sigh, if we are to listen to the last request, to close the dying eye, to watch by the cold frame, to see the corpse lie quiet in the coffin, we had rather be quiet beforehand, and pray, and be still, or we shall find the work diffi-

cult. So we shall not be ready for Holy-week if we have not got ready for it in Lent.

Perhaps some of you never think much about Holy-week and Good Friday,—scarce give it a thought, only look at it as a *name*. It has a deep meaning—the week Christ died. But however, to go to the words of the text—“Come unto Me.” He so loves us to come to Him that all things having to do with Him say “Come.”—“Come unto Me,” come for rest, come for peace, “Come, ye blessed of My Father.” It is His own word, “Come to me,” never “Go,” never but once, and that not yet; He will say it one day—“Depart from Me—go ye cursed.” But only one “Go,” and often “Come.” But when once He says Go, it is Go for ever: never “Come” again after that. So these words, “Come to Me,” belong to every time of His life—Christmas, and Good Friday, and Easter, and Ascension,—all “Come unto Me.” Good Friday, come with sorrow: Lent, come with praying; Ascension, come in triumph.

Blessed word! for if we do not come to Him, who shall we come to. “To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.” He is willing to have us all, to save us all.

So we will consider these words. A song sung by the angels at Christmas, and the echo goes on still, sounding on from the hill of Calvary; it goes on sounding through the dark garden where He rose to the hill where He ascended; "Come unto Me;"—an echo circling out for ever, till it reaches heaven, and is there lost in the one eternal song of those who have come to Him and are at rest.

And all through His life it was always "Come;" never "*Go*."

He saw St. Andrew and St. Peter, and He said, "Follow Me"—"Come to Me." Nathanael the same; St. James and St. John the same, "Come after Me;" and St. Matthew at the receipt of custom. It was all the same cry, "Come unto Me." Little children,—"*suffer them to come unto Me.*" And those to whom He seemed to say "*Go*,"—it was soon turned into "*Come*." The poor woman asked three times for her daughter, and He would not say "*Come*," and the disciples said, "Send her away," make her go away; but He would not; He bid her come, "and her daughter was made whole." It was and is His own word; He *would* have all the world in His bosom; He would not close His outstretched arms till He folds them in upon the whole ran-

somed Church. While there is one sinner that can be saved, while there is one moment of time left, He would keep His hand stretched out to save, saying, "Come unto Me."

Even in His last dark hour on the cross, His arms were stretched out wide, because He would take in all, and He closed them not till His last breath was drawn, and they were folded in the quiet tomb.

And in our last hour of life, which so many of us reach so quickly, so unexpectedly, so rapidly, He is by, close by, speaking the same sweet words to the sinking ear and the sorrowing soul,—"Come unto Me, and I will give you rest."

And after death, when we stand before the door, and ask to come in, it is still the same, "Come, ye blessed." Who can refuse so kind a call? who can turn away from so gracious a Saviour?

2. But now His call comes from a scene of sorrow, His death. The sound is sorrowful, and the way we are to tread is one of sorrow to get at Him.

Lent is like an up-hill walk, and at the end of it is Holy-week; and we follow Him up it, and stand close by Him there to hear Him call. All through Lent we are like so many figures

going up with our crosses on us, and He first with His cross. All our self-denial, all our fastings, all our church-goings, all our acts in Lent, all are to get at Him; they all end in Him, just as Lent ends in Holy-week. And I would put this before you first.

None of these things are of any use unless they bring us to Christ; they can do little for us,—only Christ; He is the end of all, and our eye must be fixed on Him through all.

Now perhaps many of us have tried to keep Lent strictly; we have received the Communion each Sunday; some of us have been at church daily; some on Wednesdays and Fridays; some of us have fasted and denied ourselves, especially, perhaps, on Wednesdays and Fridays; we have very likely given up other pleasures for Christ's sake. But if we have not loved Christ in the heart, and tried to do what He would have us, all day and every day, at home and at church, in our hearts, and thoughts, and words, we shall find no use in all these things, *none* whatever.

Fasting. That will not take away one sin, will not make up for one sin, not one; will not make God forgive us, unless we pray to Jesus Christ for Him to forgive us, come to Him. Tell one lie, and fast a year, it will not forgive it;

only coming to Christ with all your heart. Fasting brings us to Christ, and there leaves us ; brings us to the cross and there leaves us ; helps to bring us to the shut door, and there leaves us,—cannot open it one inch ; only Christ can do that ; and if we did not come to Him we should lie long enough at that door, it would not open for all our fasting. How does it bring us ? It brings us to Him by making us care less for this world, and He is not of this world ; it helps us to pray more earnestly, and with less wandering, and we pray to Him ; it makes us feel our sorrow for sin in our body, and we are sorry because we have offended Him. So fasting brings us to Him, but that is all it does ; it helps us to answer to His word, “ *Come ;*” it brings us. But if your fasting does not bring you to Christ it is of no use at all, it is worse than useless.

So of service in church, it will do nothing if it does not bring you to Christ. He is the reason why you come to church,—only for His sake, to come closer to Him. If your coming to church does not make you love Christ more it is of no use to you.

So of all your denials through Lent, all your stricter living, all your confessions of sins, if they do not bring you to Christ they are nothing at

all. Come unto *Him*. All your penitence and sorrow for sin, all the things you have done to shew you are sorry, all are of no use if they do not bring you to Him. They will not comfort you when you come to die, they will not pardon you at the last judgment, they will not help you on your journey through life.

So these words, said by Him, as it were, on Good Friday, call us to come to Him through Lent, and to do every thing for His sake only. He on the top of the hill, nailed on His cross, looks down the hill, up which we come, and says, "Come unto Me."

And His suffering bids us come to Him many ways. They are many voices; just as Christmas formed many voices, all crying the same thing,—the star, the angels, and the innocents, so now; many things say "Come unto Me" from His week of sorrow and suffering.

a. His hanging on the cross at all calls us to come to Him. "Behold and see, all ye that pass by, was ever sorrow like unto My sorrow?" There He hung, bleeding, and torn, and wounded; not a limb but what ached, every bone stretched out to the last, faint and thirsty, lonely and dying, His garments dyed in blood; and all this, why? For His own fault? He had done

no sin, though "He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows;" all for us: we were shut out of doors, had been disobedient children, so rebelled against God our Father that He put us out of heaven, and shut the door upon us, and we could not get in again. But He has pleaded for us, and suffered, and we may go in, the door is opened to us again, all through His dying, He *so* loved us. "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." He has done this; then for love's sake come unto Him: His sufferings call us, and His love calls us; for we can scarce say which was greatest, love or suffering, both were so great.

Love and suffering will draw us to come; will say "*Come.*" If a man is in great suffering we feel drawn to him, we long to go and help him; we pity him, and would relieve him. We often feel drawn to a man in sorrow whom we do not care much for when things go well with him. And love,—if another loves us we feel drawn to him. So Christ, by His sufferings and by His love, draws us to Him—both say "Come unto Me."

And those about Him seem to echo the same cry, "Come unto Him." The thief who died by His side, repenting at the last hour, and

shewing his faith, and love, and hope in his penitence, he bids us come to Him, gives us great encouragement when we think we are dying. Come to Him, He will not cast us out: "This day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." He will receive all who turn to Him, however bad they have been, so as they turn repenting. We dare not put off our repentance of one sin on account of this, for our heart may become hard,—most likely it would if we put it off. Yet it is a great comfort to know that if a man does turn with all his heart to Christ in his last illness, there is hope. If we remember any whom we have lost who did turn with earnest penitence and sorrow to Him, and shew their penitence by all the fruits a man *can* shew on his death-bed, then he is certainly received by Christ. To know this would be a great comfort, and is one of the blessed voices which come echoing from Mount Calvary — "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

His suffering, His love, His pardon, all bid us come unto Him, unto His cross, all encourage us to come.

Again; down the hill-side stands Mary Magdalene, that poor woman who had so grievously sinned, and whom He had so abundantly forgiven.

He had done all for her, and in the wide earth there was not a being whom she so loved. She cared for no one, cared for nothing, but to be with Him. And now see what He had come to,—a victim stretched out to die, and yet He bid her come to Him, and she came, and stood among the rest. She knew all was bright, though for a day there was such a cloud over all.

All you who have sinned grievously, like that woman, and are ready to repent as bitterly as she, come unto Him, He will forgive you all.

Many voices came from that sad hill, bidding us come unto Him; they are full of encouragement to those who will come, to those who will leave all to come to Him. Would that I could lead you to follow their guidance, to listen to their call.

β. "*Come,*"—but *how come?* Mount Calvary has its lesson here to. Good Friday does not only say come to Christ, but how to come, and what must be if we do come. By giving up all here, that is one way of coming; by sharing His sufferings. Rely on it men do not go so near the cross as they did without being sprinkled with His blood. No easy, light work, is that coming to Christ. Come to Him! and for rest? to that worn figure for rest? How? How come?'

To come for rest to one who looks racked and torn in every limb may seem strange. He seems at no rest: then how shall we find rest. One way of coming to Him, then, is by sorrow, and pain, and anguish; and then rest—"Come unto Me"—come unto pain.

So all who would come to Christ are reminded at this time that they must come through much sorrow. His people have more trial than the wicked; sickness, and loss, and poverty, and friendlessness, all gather round the home of the servant of God; one loss to-day and another to-morrow, the loss of all things to him who would love Jesus Christ. And if you have lived in sin long you must expect greater sorrow still, because you have a harder heart to break; you must expect little peace, yet *come*, and in that word alone is peace unspeakable. Expect trouble. If you have trials, thank God for them, they are the signs of His love, the way to come to Him. It is the way of all others of coming to Him, which we are reminded of at this time. And trouble does bring us strangely near to Christ. Pain of body and losses do help to purify us; they pull the flesh down, they make us care less for the world.

Again; how come? Take the figures round

the cross, they tell you how. \ By giving up all. His mother heard He was to die on the hill, so she came,—came to see the last of Him ; came to Him, and in coming lost her Son. So we, when we come to Him, must expect to lose what we love best on earth. So much so that I have often remarked that when men first begin to come to Christ they have some loss directly, to shew them that they must give up all if they come. The first coming is often followed by a first death, particularly with those who have led very bad lives, and have just turned. They will have sore losses. Happy are they if they bear up through it all, endure to the end. So they who follow Christ prepare for losses ; they will come, and those who come there lose all.

Again. There was the mother of Zebedee's children there. She, poor woman, once thought her sons would be great men if they followed Him ; thought He was a great King, with every earthly honour—" Let my sons sit on Thy right hand and on Thy left in Thy kingdom." She came to see the King and His kingdom. What a King, what a throne, what a kingdom ! a King of sorrows, a throne the cross, a kingdom the dying thief ; a robe quarrelled for by soldiers, on His right hand and on His left a thief. Here

was an end to all her high hopes. She came in time to see the end. Where were her sons' hopes now? Never seemed so forlorn. Where their kingdom? She came to the cross, came unto Him, to learn that those who come to Him must give up all earthly honour and greatness. Come unto Him, and give up the world, give up great success in the world for yourself and your children; give all up; you must not rely on that. If you would make them great and important here, you spoil them for heaven; the less important here, the more likely to get to heaven. Come to Him to learn that.

Come to Him, and be kind to others; share your house and home with them, deny self for them, your old parents and children, with neighbours and strangers. St. John came to Him at the cross, and He told him to go home and take care of the blessed Virgin.

Come to Him, and give up yourself for others. No coming to Him without that.

All these are voices from Calvary, voices from Holy-week and Good Friday, telling you how to come to Him.

Come,—and why come?

For *rest*, blessed rest! all have rest who come to Him. Rest the sick long for; rest the weary

soldier longs for ; rest we long for who feel that what we have to-day is gone to-morrow, when we see the cheek we love growing paler and paler, and the face thinner with coming death. Rest, blessed rest ! anything for rest, to keep what we have, not to be always changing. Blessed rest ! to be at rest, at rest from all sorrow, all want, all pain, all loss, all crying, all sin, all hard struggling, all dying. Blessed rest ! to be at rest, all through Jesus Christ, after the last hard struggle, when we have fought through the cold river, to be at rest on His bosom. No rest anywhere else. " Come unto Me, and I will give you rest."

SERMON XII.

THE REPROACH OF CHRIST.

Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach; for here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.—HEB. xiii. 13, 14.

THE world never tires of inventing modes of attack on the servants of God. From the beginning to the end it is a battle, an untiring, unwearying battle, a battle in which neither party will yield, for both think everything depends on the contest. Let the servants of God shew the flag of peace, the enemy so deride and insult their King that they are forced to arms again. Let them be merciful to their enemies, they have *no* mercy in return; every step they yield the enemy takes. Let them draw up their forces within their city of refuge, even there they are besieged, and forced to an encounter. Let them draw off from the field, they are pursued, driven down, and harassed. War, war; it must be war with a

false world, till Satan is driven out of the world. There is no hope of reconciliation, there is no possibility of peace, for the moment we are at peace with the world we are at enmity with God. In the contest we are engaged in, peace must be submission, and agreement compromise, while we still would serve the Lord. Let us do honour to the cross that still stands unfaded on our brow, as if fresh from the waters of baptism, and fighting under Christ's banner against sin, the world, and the devil, remain His faithful servants and soldiers unto our lives' end.

For the world fight to be conquerors,—bent to conquer or to die. But the glories of their conquest must be for ever clouded at the tomb, and if they die they have lost their all; while with *us*, our very death is gain, and in our victory we are more than conquerors, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

But let us proceed to examine further the modes of attack used by the world, more especially considering the terms they apply as directed against the effects of religion on the life and conduct.

Let me first remark, the attack of sinners is ever dishonest and cowardly; they attack the peculiar views of a man, or an eccentric mind, think-

ing and declaring they attack the religion of Christ. They mingle the whole of religion with individual failings; they lay to the charge of a whole army the faults or dishonesty of some one soldier in it. This is disingenuous and dishonest. They would, again, frequently attack the conduct of Christians, and make that the object of slander which they have not tried, and dare not try, by the only fair standard, the Scripture. Did they do it, they would well know that Scripture would condemn the oppressor and encourage the oppressed. But to Scripture they go not; they clasp its page of truth, or they pervert its meaning, and so extend the bounds of its allowances that they leave no act of worldliness, sensuality, and carelessness to come within the anathemas of God. They seize hold on errors of doctrine, and infirmities of practice, which they find in some thoughtless adherents, and they depress the whole standard of godliness.

This is unfair, unjust, and unworthy of the dictates of a high and honourable mind. How few, when they apply opprobrious terms to the character of another, know what they intend to express! Ask for an explanation, clear and candid, and they cannot give it. Let them be honest, and they will find the real matter of

dislike and reproach is the sober seriousness of piety,—the claims of a religion which forms cannot express; one that demands humility and submission, not sacrifice or burnt-offering, but a broken and contrite heart.

1. Thus dishonestly the world charges the servants of God with following sentiments which hinder their fulfilling their relations and duties in life; they declare that domestic ties are broken through, social ties are disregarded, the claims of business neglected, the position of age forgotten, and rank impugned; they complain that the young man forgets his respect, and the poor man his dependence; the farmer dislikes religion for his men because it fills them with new notions; the man of wealth dislikes it for the poor because it makes them look beyond their station; the planter refuses it to the slave because the bondage of man is better aided by the bondage of Satan than “the glorious liberty of the child of God.” The worldly man dislikes it for his child because it makes him condemn, by not frequenting, the gaities of a vain world which he follows. The distant relation censures the young man who pretends to more religion than his father, and would think it sin to forsake the sensuality of an earthly parent for the holiness of our Father

which is in heaven. Or there is an aged relative in the family whose life is moral, though not strict, whose good-nature and amiability are extreme, who may not take part in the utmost sins of life, but censures not those who do: this may be thought wrong by some younger member of the family, who may condemn by his own contrary practice what he has censured with words; he is condemned as formal, conceited, and self-sufficient, because he deserted the path of indifferentism for the simple purity of Gospel truth. Sin and indifference should gain no more respect when the white hair of age appears to support them. Thus does the world declare religion to be the cause of rending natural ties. Or, again, they say the man of business is ruined by it, because his observance of the Sunday, his attention to prayer and the Scriptures, his undeviating honesty and integrity, his purity of motive,—all results of the Spirit of God,—prevent his success in those lines of life which require, in the world's estimation, a conscience not over-nice and honesty not over-strict, and a view of moral conduct guided by self-interest, before prosperity or success can be expected.

Now in all these cases, either the world charge the whole Church of Christ with the errors of in-

dividuals, or they lay to their door a charge of which the word of God acquits them. The relative who separates from certain acts of his family for conscience' sake, whose case may have fallen under the observation of the world, may have been precipitate, hasty, thoughtless, or may have done right in a wrong manner, or may have been mistaken by a fancied desire for martyrdom or persecution, to make a separation ; and thus the faults of a few misguided and foolish, though perhaps well-intending men, are dishonestly charged on all Christians. Or again, it is possible, nay, probable, that the conduct condemned by the world is approved by God ; but the world have closed their eyes to the word of truth, which they would willingly alter if they dared. And while they condemn the member of a family who refuses to join in the oath of the blasphemer, the merriment of the Sabbath-breaker, the frivolity of light society, the coldness of heartless formality, they forget what the word of God has declared on the subject ; for hear what Jesus Christ saith : " He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me ; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me." " Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto

you." And these texts the world either explains away or rejects.

Thus it charges on religion the blame of rending asunder the ties of social life, of unfitting man for the business of his station, either laying the faults of some on all, or passing a verdict different from that in God's written word.

Let not words beguile us. Many are led away from the path of life by the unjust ridicule of others. Shall we injure and turn back another from the path of life which he is labouring to reach by telling him his anxiety is misplaced, and his character about to be wrecked amid the delusions of methodism and folly? What will such a remark effect, if anything, but to rob a forlorn yet immortal spirit of its intercourse with God, and of its peace throughout eternity? If he is in earnest, God will bring him home.

2. But again; the servants of God are charged with gloom, asceticism, and melancholy; their religion is declared to deprive them of the innocent pleasures of life; the harmless foibles of youth are declared damnable sins, and the smiling countenance of cheerfulness pronounced guilty; that life is ever clouded by the prospect of death; the present marred by looking to the future; man neglected by choosing God. Now here

again the charge is dishonest. There are some who, from constitution of mind, allow their religion to be infected with melancholy, which would equally have had effect in the gayer scenes of life. And there are others who, from adopting mistaken views of religion, throw a gloom over it which belongs not to the religion of Christ; while on the other hand it is frequently the case that here also the world judges from its own feelings, not the Bible. There is a seriousness in the prospect of death, there is an awfulness in the prospect of judgment, there is an importance in the approach of eternity, which should absorb the feelings of a mortal and fallen man. But in the midst of it all there is a peace which supports him, which should prevent a gloomy and melancholy view of the life with which he is charged, a gloom far more truly belonging to the wasted health, shattered constitution, and tired spirits, of the being whose only happiness is the excitement of gaiety, or the violent merriment of intemperance or sensuality.

The world charges the Church of Christ with melancholy and gloom, because they are preparing for a time when the world will have wrecked its now fair and glittering vessels on the rocks and quicksands of perdition; because they fix

their treasures where no earthly uncertainty can exhaust them ; because they contemplate the desolation of death, the terribleness of judgment, and provide a reprieve from the one and an advocate for the other, when the scoffer shall be arraigned at the same bar, charged with crimes he cannot deny, without a voice to defend him or a chance for his life. Far more do we return the charge of cheerlessness on those whose only happiness is excitement, and whose prospects hereafter are without hope.

3. But further, the world charges the servants of God with *inconsistency*. A certain frivolous man of pleasure has heard by calumnious report of some one who has professed high principles, and has been betrayed into some gross action of sin,—of religion, or preaching, or exposition, or singing, or writing having been made the cover for fostering vanity, satisfying lust, subserving self-interest ; he has heard of some friend who follows a particular preacher for some human reason ; or who mixes in some gaiety, but not in others ; who objects to the theatre, but not to the ball, or to the gambling-house, but not to sceptical literature ; or of some persons who neglect their own children to attend the parish school, or their own family on Sunday because

they devote their hours to the Sunday-school. Delighted with this discovery, the man of the world talks of the case in every resort of gaiety, lays the charge against all the Church of Christ, makes it the subject of some book of satire, and mocks at Christ through the inconsistencies of His servants.

Were we as ready to find fault with the world, as keen in our views of their errors, as strict in our attacks on all for the guilt of some, as high in our demands for consistency, as anxious in our hearts to find the fault, and having found, to spread it, where would be the end to the charges of uncharitableness, self-conceit, and meanness with which we should be at once met? Did we require as much clear honesty in the motives of the man of business, as exact formality in the man of honour, as consistent liberality in the man of charity, as they require exact consistency in the religious, where should we rest from their abuse? Thus, then, by charging the inconsistencies of some misguided men on the occasional errors of some well-guided men; by conceiving one deviation from principle a reason to suspect hypocrisy through all, do the world attack the whole Church of Christ with the charge of inconsistency, and practice contrary to their principles.

4. Again ; they are declared to be uncharitable, to be harsh, to be infringers of the divine command not to judge another, because they venture to suspect that a profligate life shews an unchanged heart, or no love to man argues no love to God, or the whole life devoted to the world proves no treasure or heart in eternity. Thus, let a man be constantly intemperate, a waster of time, and a breaker of Sunday ; it is considered uncharitable to suspect his religion ; *it may be* the peculiarity of disposition, or *it may be* an occasional temptation yielded to : while one inconsistent act of a religious man is considered by the world, who is thus the friend of charitable constructions, sufficient to declare the heart hypocritical and deceitful. What does the world answer to this charge ? It says, We do not make such high profession ; we do not pretend to give our hearts to God. As if the frank confession, the daring avowal of their heart and life apostacy could save them from the wages of sin ; ever pleading our Lord's injunction to "judge no man," and never remembering the caution from the same lips, uttered in the same discourse, and pronounced with the same authority,—“By their fruits ye shall know them ; a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, nei-

ther can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Thus does the world attack the very word of Christ Himself in their hatred for His servants ; thus it strikes the Master, while it levels the blow at His servants ; thus it delights in its attacks on the Lord of glory ; thus is it dishonest, unfair, and false, by adducing one truth and hiding another. It has ever been that the world has arrayed itself against the Lord and His Anointed : once in open and undisguised battle, now in covered and concealed hypocrisy. But behold, thus saith the Lord, "These spirits of devils go forth into the whole world, to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty, (to the place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon ;) and the kings of the earth and their armies shall gather together to make war against the Lamb and against His army ; and the Lamb shall overcome them : for He is Lord of lords and King of kings ; and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful."

Such is the prospect the world has.—What is ours? When the minister of God received you an infant in his arms, and signed your forehead with the sign of the cross, such was

the promise you made, which was witnessed by the Church, heard by angels, and recorded against you by God. "We receive this person into the congregation of Christ's flock, and do sign him with the sign of the cross, in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under His banner, against sin, the world, and the devil; and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end." Here is the plighted vow you made in your infant years, which you have renewed frequently at the altar of God, and in your own chamber. Shall you, then, be afraid what man can do unto you? shall you fear his scoff, or flinch beneath his reproach? Jesus despised that shame through years of infamy and pain; shall we refuse to bear it? Jesus, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate; then "let us go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." He is there already; He hath borne it before us. Let us go to Him.

"A few short years of conflict past,
We meet around the throne at last,"

and receive at the hand of the Captain of our salvation, who was made perfect through sufferings, a crown of glory which fadeth not away.

With such a prospect, and with such an example, shall we hesitate, will it even require a pang, to bear the reproach, to despise the shame, to be reviled of man? When the soldier sets forward on his first march, with all the vigour of youthful spirits and untried strength, to meet on the embattled field the enemy who marches to the contest; when the banner of his country floats above him, the prayers of the people urge him on, and the prospect of honours glitters before him; does he feel damped in his ardour because the foe taunts him with feelings he never had, or insults the cause in which he is engaged? Does not, rather, every insult increase his courage and confirm his resolution? And could he be told that no uncertain victory awaits his efforts, that if he be but firm and courageous his very resistance shall ensure a conquest, that honour *must* crown effort, and his final object must be gained, who would not be surprised to see that youthful soldier turn back in the day of battle? And if, beyond this, a leader and captain that he loved led him on to the fight, and encouraged him with his voice, whose own breast was scarred with wounds, and his hair grown grey in the battles of his king, if he saw him insulted by the foe, and attacked on all sides, bear-

ing it with fortitude and courage, would not the youthful soldier turn to defend the leader that he loved, feel every shaft that pierced his bosom as if it pierced his own, and bear on his own shield, aye, and in his breast, the arrow intended for his captain? And if, beyond this, the battle he fought were for life and liberty, and the chain of slavery had clanked for years around the fettered limbs of that youth, and still hung around the forms he loved at home; if the struggle he was engaged in were for liberty and freedom; if the certain end and result of it was the bursting of those chains and the destruction of that slavery, who would wonder that the young soldier would fight with a courage that would risk every consideration of ease or present convenience, since his victory was certain and his crown incorruptible?

And shall we flinch, who strive in so far nobler a contest, who groan in so bitter a slavery, who fight for an eternal freedom, whose home is heaven, and our crown a crown of glory which fadeth not away?

In our text we have two motives held forth to us, as reasons for bearing without fear the reproach of Christ.

1. That Jesus has suffered before us.

2. That here we have no continuing city.

1. First. Jesus, "that He might sanctify the people by His blood, suffered without the gate." Truly did He go forth, bearing His own reproach ; for He went forth from the gate of the city bearing His cross, made of the accursed tree, and wearing the crown of thorns. From His manger-cradle to His insulting death a reproached and injured Man, a patient, enduring God. His purity was hated by the impure, so that His name became a term of derision ; His disciples wondered and wept at His fate. With power to calm the sea and raise the dead, He yielded, an unresisting victim, to the malice of His people. Known to thousands whom His kindness had blessed, He died alone, pitied but by the few tears of some in the humblest walks of life. From this object of national hatred His very disciples fled away ; and on the cross, where He hung amid the solitary darkness of the shadowed air, His Father left Him to Himself. Reproach, says the prophet, broke His heart : "He looked for some to have pity, but there was no man." Refuge failed Him ; there was none to care for His soul. But behold, this dishonoured Sufferer at length gave witness to His own character. The grave gave up the dead

who could not know corruption ; He came forth to shew Himself still God, to recall His scattered followers : He came forth to shew that the reproach that had been cast upon His name was false ; He came to tell the world He had suffered, not for Himself, but for the sins of His people ; He came forth that He might ascend beyond the clamours of His foes, and welcomed by the anthems of celestial worshippers, He might “ become an everlasting Prince and Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel and remission of sins.” He was gone, and the descending Spirit filling the bosoms of His disciples, they forgot the shame, and rejoiced in the reproach. On the darkness of that dishonour God had shed His lustre. It was *there* that justice and love had embraced each other ; it was *there* that sin was conquered ; and when this was proclaimed from the lips of one apostle, three thousand witnesses were added to the number ; and the whole accordant band, gazing on the broken tomb of their Master, exclaimed, “ God forbid that we should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

He has borne that cross before us, therefore let us bear it,—bear it meekly, bear it calmly, bear it *all* ; let us meet it,—the charges of fanaticism

and over-strictness, of enthusiasm or superstition, the false report of falsehood and dishonesty, —let us meet it as He met it, not in anger but in love; not in repining, but in pity and in prayer—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

2. "Here we have no continuing city." The tent in which we lodge will soon be taken down; the wilderness through which we travel must soon draw to its end. The world around us is not our home; the calumny of the sinner, the reproach of the world, sound for the last time upon the ear of death. Soon, very soon, shall the body that suffers now rest in the quiet seclusion of the grave, where the voice of the scoffer is uttered in vain, and the malice of the world is felt no more. We are wanderers going to our rest, pilgrims journeying home. Each day must carry us nearer to our rest. Little *then* will it matter if we have had a small share of the smile of men. We go where the world can no longer hurt us, and where sin no longer rules. A little while longer bear the reproach our Redeemer bore; a little longer be a despised Nazarene, proud to be His injured follower in every scene of life. Let us walk with a calm, consistent cheerfulness, glad to suffer reproach

for His name, honoured in being thought worthy to share the burden of His cross. Like Him, let us die without the city, till like Him we burst the bands of the sepulchre, and high above every reproach, far beyond all infamy, we rise to the everlasting mansions of our Father's home, and worship before the throne of heaven the God we followed through the reproach of earth.

SERMON XIII.

THE REPROACH OF CHRIST.

Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach ; for here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.—HEB. xiii. 13, 14.

THERE was a day when the outward profession of love to Christ was the certain road to the stake and the block ; when the profession of faith in Christ Jesus purchased no home but the desert and no pillow but the cave ; there was a day when the outward profession of Christ Jesus was the signal for expulsion from all society, save that of the wild beast of the wilderness ; when the Christian appeared not amid the public haunts of men, save attended by an executioner, or the multitude that followed to see him die. In those days the Christian, by his very profession, cared not for the world nor the things of the world ; what he professed he was compelled to practise ; what he uttered with his lips he paid for with his

life. *Then* were the endearments of relations, the tenderness of the wife, and the anxiety of the mother, changed for the solitary companionship of the vulture or the stern rigour of the jailor ; *then* were the comforts and relaxations of home changed for the night in the wilderness or the damp of the prison cell ; *then* were the charms of society, all that allures and all that attracts in the intercourse of man, exchanged for months of solitary contemplation and wearisome self-reflection ; *then* were the intellectual pleasures of the mind, the sensual gratifications of the body, the beauties of nature, the singing bird and the murmuring stream, the freshness of the breeze and the warmth of the sun, exchanged for the cheerless dungeon of the Roman persecutors ; *then* was the careless mind and the cheerful countenance exchanged for the anxious brow and worn-out face of the shunned victim of human society ; *then* were they " stoned, sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword : they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented ; they wandered in deserts and caves of the earth." The voice of the friend cheered not the soul of the tempted, nor did the advice of the advanced Christian encourage the timid beginner. Then, like Jesus

were they led of the spirit into the wilderness, and of the same spirit were they led back into the world to die. In those days Christians went forth without the camp, bearing the reproach of Christ, for here they had no continuing city.

But it is so no longer ; religion has become the fashion, and the profession of all ; the legislator and the soldier, the monarch and the commoner, now all profess the religion for which our fathers bled. The opposition of violence is no longer offered to the Church or servants of God ; the legislator pretends in all his acts to acknowledge the Almighty, and the man of fashion is ashamed to be an infidel, and the poor man consents at least to wear the cloak of religion ; the passing beggar invokes you in the name of God, and the child of a few years old addresses His throne of grace. His churches rise in each town and village, and with a common voice from their shrines do the devotions arise from the lips of the formalist and the heart of the penitent ; the judge recommends the criminal to find pardon in Christ ere the morning of his execution ; the legislative assembly opens with an address to the Spirit of God ; at the name of Jesus the peasant uncovers his brow, and the monarch bends the knee ; the ministers of God are protected by the

state, and the profane and profligate shunned by respectable society ; none venture to appoint without reference to God's pleasure. From north to south and from east to west in our land may it be said, " This people draw near to Me with their mouth, and with their lips do they honour Me." " They sit before God as His people, and they hear His words, with their mouth do they shew much love." But may it not be added of our people, " They have removed their heart far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught with the precept of men ?"

It may much be doubted if real religion is increased, though its forms be more attended to. The stake and the axe are removed, the shout of the heathen and the triumph of the infidel have passed away ; religion is honoured by the lip in every rank and every situation in life ; but there is the same opposition to the real doctrines of the Gospel and the true servants of Christ as there was when the laws protected neither one nor the other. Oh " the heart of this people is far from Me."

1. The legislator may honour God by the compelled and empty acknowledgment of the lips, while he dishonours His name by the profanity

of the oath, by the profligacy of private life, by the personal profanation of Sunday.

2. The man of fashion shuns the infidel or the atheist, while he loves the things of the world : God is not in all his thoughts, and the excitement of godless society dissipates his thoughts and diverts his mind day after day and week after week, frequently breaking in on the sacred stillness of Sunday.

3. The man of labour acknowledges God, and attends His House often, but to be seen of man ; while his neglected family, his profane example, his intemperate habits, proclaim his lips and not his heart to honour God.

4. Churches are filled with the outward observers of religion, but in the heart what wandering thoughts, what worldly schemes, what unkind opinions, what vain desires ! How does the agriculturist plan for his fields, how does the tradesman settle his accounts, how does the indolent re-peruse his novel, how does the careless sleep and slumber, how does the critic condemn the sermon, and the uncharitable condemn his neighbours ! High and low, rich and poor many honour God with their lips, while their heart is far from Him.

There is as much opposition to the doctrine

and service of the Gospel as ever; it has not improved religion, that among men religion has become more fashionable. Still is the heart, the inner, natural heart of man, as much opposed to the Gospel doctrines and servants as ever. Still does the unconverted child resist and evade and murmur at the anxious effort of religious parents. Still do the unconverted parents oppose and oppress their religious children. Still does the unconverted wife fret in the bitterness of mortified vanity at the retiring piety of her husband, and the unconverted husband exercise an unfeeling severity over the religious feelings of his wife. Still do unconverted servants bear false witness and circulate false reports against their religious masters, and unconverted masters make a mock at what they are pleased to call the hypocritical canting of their religious servants. All classes, all relations, all occupations of human life, still oppose the real doctrines of the Gospel and those who obey them, although they themselves profess to honour religion outwardly, as much as when that opposition could be shewn by violence, massacre, and persecution.

II. Having suggested this, namely, that the exterior, the outward profession of Christianity, has not lessened the inward feeling against its

inward principles, or the outward opposition and heart-hatred for its servants and followers ; let us first clear away an objection, and then see in what ways religion is attacked, and under what names, that we may have confidence under the injustice of attacks which might make some fear, and be encouraged by the advice of the text to bear the reproach of Christ, since here we have no continuing city.

There is an objection which might naturally arise in the minds of some : How can it be true that men in general are so really opposed to religion, when they profess so much ? Why should we not think the attackers in the right, and those whom they blame in the wrong ? Why should spirituality of mind and orthodox views be denied to be possessed by those who seem so anxious in the cause of religion ? In brief, can men be such hypocrites as they are ? I answer, The zeal of many for religion is false ; it is no zeal for real religion at all, which we think to be such. It is not religion these men of the world admire, it is not religion they feel, it is not religion they fight for, it is not religion they even live for ; it is what *they* mistake for religion, and what often *we* mistake for religion, but in fact is something else that wears its garb ; it is a counterfeit of religion ;

they are self-deceived and deceive others ; they have no religion, therefore they hate it. The heart is as untouched as the heart of the heathen persecutor, as far as the real, vital, spiritual energies of the pure service of the Lord God, through Jesus Christ His Son, is concerned.

And of these there are many in the world and around us ; to them, perhaps, may some of us to-day belong.

1. First, there is the lover of order, regularity, and a sober spirit, an inclination belonging to him by disposition. This man admires religion, and fights for it, because it is the best machine for putting things and keeping things in order. The established Church and the adherence to it is an orderly system ; it meets his notions of regular proceedings, and suits his views for curbing in the fancies and unchastened feelings of the inaccurate man. This man loves order, but does not *therefore* love religion.

2. Again, there is the man of good moral disposition ; he has a natural aversion to crime, to profligacy, to drunkenness, to dishonesty ; he hates it, and feels a disgust at it ; his feelings naturally admire the strict and upright life of subdued passion ; he thinks this religion, others call it so, and he does battle for his own incli-

nation to admire a moral life, and thinks he fights for religion. But the mere moralist is not a religious man. This man loves morality, but does not *therefore* love religion.

3. Thirdly, there is the man of taste, the man who venerates antiquity, the man who loves the doings of past ages, and despises all that is done in the present. There is a sort of sacred and sublime feeling which mingles in all this which men think religion ; men who are solemn when gazing on a ruined minster or a cathedral, but are not solemn at the sight of a man giving way to passion. These men worship the ruined shaft or mouldering pillar of the temple, and think they worship the God who inhabited it : who think they worship and admire the attributes and will of a most holy God, while in fact they admire but the place where His glory dwelt ; they worship the footstool, and they forget the throne ; they worship the throne, and forget Him who sitteth thereon ; they kneel at the mercy-seat, and forget the ark and the glory of God before it ; they love antiquity, they love lovely things, and think it is love to God. It has nothing to do with it ; it is altogether independent of it ; it is a worship of mind, not God, of the creature, not the Creator. The lover of an-

tiquity is not of necessity a religious man. These men love antiquity, but they love not religion.

4. Again, there is the politician, the man who has a high veneration for the established Church, as the work of his forefathers, and thinks this is religion; the man who has a peculiar objection to the use of the word "Jesus," and will always rather see others placed in its stead, taking the crown from the brow of his Lord, and placing it on the Church; crowning the body, not the head, which is Christ, "in whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." Or the man of a strong liberal feeling in politics, who attributes it to an enlarged spirit of Christian benevolence, or Christian liberty, or Christian charity. Or the man who, for political reasons, considers religion or the Church a good thing for preserving order; the magistrate, or the minister, or the legislator, or the judge, who sees no better reason for religion, than that it keeps men in order, and produces certain good results, but would do away with it all if the state would be made better by it; men who sacrifice the honour and worship of God at the altar of human expediency. The man of political feeling is not *therefore* religious.

5. Then, again, there is the man of openly vicious habits, who professes religion, or even defends it in its outworks, because he is ashamed of being an infidel, or an atheist, or a professed profligate. These men are too cowardly to be infidels and too manly to be religious. These men are ashamed of no religion, but they have no religion.

6. Or there is the man who is religious, or defends religion, or goes to church, or reads his Bible, or says his prayers twice a-day, for no better reason than that he had always done so, or his father had done it before him, or his mother had taught him to do so ; the mere creature of habit, who would have knelt as well in the mosque of Mahomet or the temple of Juggernaut, as at the altar of the Lord God of Hosts, if only he had been in the habit of doing so, or his fathers before him. These men love habit.

Thus do these men honour God with their lips, while their hearts are far from Him. These mistake something else for religion. That love for antiquity, that veneration of past ages, that admiration of intellect, that worship of habit, there is of necessity no real religion in them all, no change of heart, no worship of God in it all, no fear of His anger, no admiration of His will :

“In vain do these men worship God, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men.”

Then it is for this reason that so many men attack religion while they profess to love it, viz. they lack real religion.

III. It is from such as these that the servant of God meets with opposition. It is from such as these he bears the reproach his Saviour bore before him, who have ever persecuted His servants, and will do so to the end. It matters not if that persecution comes from the open scoffer or the plausible hypocrite; it matters not if it come in the shape of violence and death, or the laugh of ridicule, or the term of contempt; it is the same principle that produces it, it is the same spirit must bear it; it is equally painful to the natural heart to endure.

What, then, are the various kinds of reproach, or terms of reproach, thrown on the servants of God by the followers of sin and Satan? They are many, and of different kinds. Let us examine each of their classes distinctly.

1. The world says of the servants of God that their principles lead to no works, to deficiency in practice. Mark, for instance, that man; he is a man of principle, and integrity, and upright con-

duct in the world. This man has a son, a young man growing up to years of discretion, with promising talents, industrious habits, and striking abilities. He hears all this of him, that he is strict in every moral duty, punctual to his engagements, and faithful to his contracts ; he is, moreover, soberly religious, regular in the observance of the Sabbath and attendance at God's house, and not at all infected with methodism. The father is delighted ; a glow of what is called pride warms his heart, while an unbidden tear of gratitude starts to his eye. After some time he hears the moral goodness of his son's character, viz. his practice is increased, but his religion seems to have touched his mind as well as his conduct, Holy Scripture becomes interesting to him ; he studies it every day, and often speaks of it ; not satisfied with keeping away from every wicked practice, he yearns after a higher life ; he objects, for himself, to many innocent pleasures of the world. The father is alarmed, he writes to remonstrate ; he sets forth the respectability which belongs to moderate religion, the arrogance of a young man presuming to set up his opinion, and differ from so many older than himself ; he expresses a hope that the delusion will soon pass

off. His son replies, under a deep sense of eternal things, appeals to Scripture, declares his feelings and conduct to be produced by an influence over his character by God's Holy Spirit. There are some who would be less offended to see their sons associate with profligates and gamblers than with the servants of God and a crucified Saviour.

This young man's practice is better than ever, but his spirit is altered, and so the world condemns his practice. Here is one of the terms of reproach we have for Christ's sake to bear. If there be a man without practice, say not that religion of the heart brings no practice; but rather that no practice shews no religion at heart. Far would I be from defending lax professors, rather would I shun them; they are not of us, nor come they from us. Holiness is the Christian's aim; but the world judges from abuses, and reproaches the man of God for lack of practice.

2. Secondly, the world calls the servants of Christ *enthusiasts*. Here is another term of reproach. And if the servants of God are enthusiasts for no better reason than that they give their heart and soul to seeking a treasure existing on no other warrant than that of faith, who

were so great enthusiasts as David, and Moses, and Samuel, and the prophets, who lived and died to serve and proclaim a Saviour as yet unseen? Who so great an enthusiast as Noah, who built his ark on a warning of a danger not seen as yet, and prepared it "to the saving of his house?" Who so great an enthusiast as Abraham, who trusted to the promise of Jehovah to leave his native land, and go forth a wanderer, seeking an as yet unseen abode? If such are enthusiasts, who so great as the prophets of ancient Israel, who lived and suffered, preached and died, for truths they could never have realized, save in the misty horizon of inspired revelation? Who so great as the apostles of other days, who went forth homeless, friendless, and pennyless, to preach a despised and hated religion, with no single hope of success save the warrant of a God whom they saw no longer with the eye? Who so great as St. Peter, St. John, St. Stephen, and St. James, who sealed with their blood the labours of their life, and resigned the world for an unseen inheritance beyond the confines of the grave? Who so great an enthusiast as the great apostle of the Gentiles, who through perils by land and perils by sea, in stripes, in imprisonments, in persecutions; by labours, by watchings and

fastings ; through evil report and good report, endured the cross and despised the shame—encouraged by love to a Saviour he had never seen on earth, and the prospect of a world known only through report ? Oh if such be enthusiasm, if the world calls such as these enthusiasts, (of whom the world is not worthy,) would they not, dared they, (I speak with reverence,) charge with enthusiasm the Son of God Himself, who burst from the Hosannahs of angels, impelled by a love no human breast could scan, set forth a solitary unnoticed stranger on the task of calling to Himself a world which hated Him, and rescuing from perdition those who knew Him not ? Enthusiasm ! Oh surely it would deserve the name, when before Him lay the certain prospect of a cruel death from the very men He came to save. But urged on by the love He bore us, He met it through years of sorrow without a murmur and without a regret. Call this enthusiasm if you will ; the same spirit actuates the man of God as did these. But further : who such enthusiasts as the world itself, who are seeking happiness with so little chance ; risking health, honour, heaven, everything, for a chance so desperate, for odds so fearful ? Who so great an enthusiast as the woman who rushes into the gay and thoughtless dissipation of fa-

shionable life, and devotes health, time, friends, quiet, children, husband, for the poor chance of finding happiness—a chance she knows is desperate? Who so great an enthusiast as the mother who neglects God, neglects religion, neglects her Bible, neglects her all on earth, her all in eternity, to devote her affection to the child she has made her god; to make that child an idol, and to find it clay; to adorn what death must remove so soon from the tenderest embrace? Who so great an enthusiast as the man of business, who spends toilsome weary days and sleepless nights, who resigns the society of a family circle, who hazards money, and with it peace of mind, on speculations; who is satisfied to be without peace or ease, to purchase a chance of future success, which after a life of toil may crown the decrepit brow of age, or be left to a relation? Who so great enthusiasts as these? and yet they call *us* enthusiasts, who at least are toiling for a more certain heritage, who at least are supported by strength they never have, who at least are resting on a more certain promise, who at least are pursuing no fleeting phantom, but one that cheers the heart in life and in death; more stable than the foibles of gaiety, more lasting than the idol of affection, more secure than the tenure of specu-

lation ; a hope that *promises* what *they* but strive for, which smiles even on the urn of the departed friend, and offers as its future reward, on the promise of Him who is faithful and true, "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

3. Another term of reproach frequently used is that of *Dissenter*, *Calvinist*, or some other title which implies their not belonging to the sound and orthodox Church of Christ.

And here again the title is one merely of insult and opprobrium. If a man make much of the duty of prayer, he is considered infected with all the poison of those who abuse the privilege of prayer, by making it depend on frames and feelings only. If a man leave the gayer scenes of dissipated life, he is at once an ascetic, a hermit, or a monk ; if he restrain immoderateness of dress, he is a Quaker, or makes religion consist in dress ; if he be kind, forgiving, anxious for religious intercourse, he is a socialist ; if he reject stiff formalities, he is a loose, free-thinking liberalist, holding opinions which must lead to Socinianism or atheism ; if he make much of the free, undeserved grace of God to aid human beings, and the free undeserved love of God to save human beings, he is a Calvinist, a Fatalist,

or a Predestinarian ; if he make much of the means of grace, of the use of Baptism, of the reception of the Lord's Supper, of the Church service, he is a Roman Catholic ; if he think less of these things, he is a Baptist, or a Wesleyan. Let him renounce any connection with all these classes ; let him prove by word, and sound argument, that he is not a Baptist, that he renounces formalism, that he dreads Socialism, he is no better off in the world's opinion, but is a despised and injured man still. The world shifts its attack, but it shifts not its hatred from the man of God. Let him profess a desire to fly, in every moment of difficulty, to the Bible as a solution, he is considered a weak man, good and misguided, a man of no knowledge, no learning ; let him take up learning and use scientific arguments, he is directly making religion depend on intellectual attainments. "John the Baptist came unto you neither eating nor drinking, and ye say he hath a devil ; but I have come unto you eating and drinking, and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, the friend of publicans and sinners."

There is nothing will satisfy the world which is pleasing to God. In their estimation, the servants of the Most High will be ever in low

repute, small, and of no reputation. The strongest will be counted weak, the wisest a fool. Let a man once profess and obey the principles of the Gospel, he forfeits at once all the good opinions of mankind, till he renounce or palliate them.

SERMON XIV.

THE RESURRECTION.—MARY MAGDALENE.

They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.—JOHN XX. 13.

How exquisitely, how touchingly beautiful is the story of the resurrection ! But in it all, no part is so striking as the part taken in it by Mary Magdalene ; her conduct and her character are so deeply interesting to every one who, like her, has been a great and grievous sinner against their crucified Redeemer. I would ask them to follow her, with me, on this happy morning, to find a risen Saviour, who may bid their sorrows flee away, and may speak peace and pardon to their troubled spirit. Surely I must speak to many who are mourning over sins which are daily making them grieve, and casting doubts over their minds, whether or not they shall be safe at last. To them I would say, Jesus Christ is risen to-day ; He has burst the bonds and fetters of the grave,

and you who are looking to Him for salvation may rise from your sins, and bid Satan harass you no more, since to-day your Saviour conquered him; to-day He rose triumphant over Satan, sin, and the world; to-day He made you more than conquerors; to-day, happy Easter-day, all should speak peace to your spirit, "for you are Christ's and Christ is God's."

Let us, then, study particularly the story of Mary, for Mary had been a great sinner, and loved Jesus much.

I. He had died at three in the afternoon of Friday; the preparation for the Passover, which was to be offered soon, compelled His burial to be very hurried, and therefore prevented His Body being properly embalmed, which was always the custom among the Jews, although we find Nicodemus had brought some spices with which he wrapt up the Body; with these it was laid in the sepulchre in the garden. But the women and disciples of our Lord who had followed Him from Galilee were unwilling that this should be all the attention given to the Body of so loved a Master. Thus we find in the story that they lingered in the garden until quite late on Saturday evening, to see exactly how the Body was laid, and then returned to

get ready the spices and ointments to anoint Him on the Sunday morning. It would be unlawful to do this on the Saturday, their Sabbath, and it was probably for this reason that God appointed Friday as the day of our Lord's death, in order that He might lie three days in the grave undisturbed.

It appears, then, that having got their spices ready, these women—who certainly in this shewed more respect for their Master than the more desponding men—arose early on the Sunday morning to go to the garden. Now, from the Gospel accounts, there were *two parties* who met at the tomb, the one containing Salome, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James; the other a larger party, which we may call the party of Joanna. Doubtless the first party had lodged through that night with the eleven apostles themselves, as being of some consequence in our Lord's ministry.

Before day-dawn, then, these devoted and attached servants of Jesus, only wishing the hours away that they might be with the Body of Him they loved, started with their small parcels of spice and myrrh to embalm the Body.

First and chief, Mary of Magdala and the other two set out for the tomb. How deeply

would they converse by the way of all that had so lately happened; and how eagerly would they brush away the morning dew with their footsteps, to be as soon as possible at the sepulchre! They probably knew nothing of the guard that was stationed there; and even had they, nothing perhaps would have terrified them in coming at the Body of their beloved Master. Honoured be their memory! A timid woman forgot her fear and weakness, and assumed an unusual courage for the sake of Christ. St. Mark tells us that as they walked along they wondered who should move away the stone from the sepulchre. How anxiously they conversed together! but above all, how eagerly did Mary—Mary, who had loved so much, Mary, who had had so much forgiven—how did she long again to bathe that blessed Body with her tears of sorrow, and wipe it with the hairs of her head. Poor Mary! none had ever spoken so kindly to her as Jesus Christ, none had ever bade her drooping spirit cheer when oppressed with its many sins. The proud Pharisee had bid her stand off with scorn, and shut her out from mercy. She had been a sinner, and the world had looked harshly on her; but Jesus had spoken kindly to her, had known her sorrows, had spoken of peace and pardon,

had been to her a loving Saviour, and never would she find such a friend again. Unused to words of pity, the Magdalene had wept away many an hour of deep unnoticed sorrow; but the Son of God had sought her out, had seen her penitence, and spoken such comfort to her aching heart as she should never forget. How anxious, then, was Mary to reach the Body of her only Friend! how bitterly had she felt His cruel death! At length they arrive, at the rising of the sun, as St. Mark tells us, at the sepulchre. All the city slept, but these women were already in the garden. But behold, the tomb stands open, the stone is rolled away, the Body of Jesus is gone, and an angel sits in its place!

How bitter a disappointment! the corpse is gone, they are stopped in their pious purpose of gratitude towards their Master. At the first sight of this unexpected disappearance, Mary, who was the youngest and most active of the three, runs with haste to the city to tell Peter and the rest that He was gone. Peter and John, shut up in retirement for fear of the Jews, the one overwhelmed with sorrow for his denial, the other for the Master he had loved, instantly run to the tomb. The Body was indeed gone, the linen clothes were there, the pressure where

the Body had lain, but not Jesus. Then He was either taken away or had risen : they did not believe the last, for as yet "they knew not the Scripture, that He must rise from the dead." Then the disciples went away again to their own home. But not Mary ; she could not go home, so desolate, so heart-broken, so sad, she could not go back to her dull, cheerless home, when she had lost her only Friend ; she stays behind, weeping over the empty tomb : "But Mary stood without at the sepulchre, weeping." She looked into the sepulchre, and two angels sat there. "They say unto her, Woman, why weep-est thou ? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." They give her no answer ; they let her look round ; Jesus stands beside her, but she knew Him not. "Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou ? whom seekest thou ? she, supposing Him to be the gardener, saith unto Him, Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away."

Was ever anything so beautiful as the touching scene before us ? "They have taken away my Lord !" What devotion does this shew towards her Saviour ! He that had forgiven her

had gained her whole heart; He was her Lord, her Master, her Saviour, her God, her all—they have taken Him away, and away from Him she cannot be happy. Above all, mark her address to Jesus, thinking He was the gardener, “Sir, if thou have borne *Him* hence”—“Him,” she does not mention whom; she takes for granted all must know who she meant; she thinks no one can doubt the cause of her grief; she could not mean any but Jesus; she was full of *Him*, and she thinks every one else must be so too; how striking, her not mentioning His name in her address to the supposed gardener, so absorbed was her every thought, so wrapt up in Jesus, so devoted to Him; all must know what she wept for. “Tell me where thou hast laid Him.” If you could not find room to leave Him in the garden and put His Body out of the way, tell *me* where it is, and “I will take it away.” Who so well take care of it as the pardoned Mary? I will carry the Body away, and take care of it myself; tell me but where He is, and no trouble shall be too much for me to possess Him.

The task indeed were hard to find words to express the devotion of Mary’s feelings; so completely absorbed in her loss and grief, she

seemed not to notice the presence of the angels. She cared not what the gardener might think of her conduct, she only wanted to be with Christ.

II. And now, before we go on further with the story, what is the lesson we learn from the tale before us?

Do I speak to some sinner who, like Mary, has sinned against God, and is spending many an hour of sorrow over sin? Sinner, does the world scorn you as it scorned Mary? do men bid you have no hope? do they bid you stand away, as they did her? does your conscience smite you, as did hers? have you committed such sins as to make you despair? do you feel as if heaven were shut against you, as if hell must be your portion? Then, sorrowing sinner, let me ask you, Is not her God your God, and her Saviour your Saviour? Have you ever gone to Him? have you tried what He can do for your case? have you followed His footsteps, and borne His cross? have you lived, like Mary, on His words of peace and comfort? If you have not, you know nothing yet of the consolation you *might have*.

Mary was not a sinner for a day, she sinned over and over again, a known, noted, and noto-

rious sinner. Then are you worse than she? have you sinned so often that you are inclined to give all up in despair? Look to the Saviour whom she loved, and He shall be to you what He was to her. You need not despair, if you are but true in your repentance.

1. I would not, God knows, make too light of sin; I would not make too little of the bitter work of repentance. But if you are truly heart-broken for your sins, if you feel them like Mary felt them, then, like her, carry them to the foot of her Master's cross; lay them there to be washed by His blood; be first to meet Him, wherever He may be found; in life, in death, in evil report, in good report, in shame, dishonour, reproach, and infamy, like her, bear His name and share His cause, and like her you shall be forgiven.

I would be cautious in speaking thus, lest you should think too light of the sins to which you are daily liable. I would be cautious in speaking of that full, free, abundant pardon, lest you should think too little of the sins for which that pardon is offered. But there is something so unutterably lovely in the tale of Mary and her Lord, that, if on any day in all the year I would speak of pardon, peace, hope, and heaven, it

should be when, like her, we assemble after His death to meet Him at the tomb,—it should be on Easter Day.

2. The case of Mary is just the case of every sinner when first brought to a knowledge of the Saviour. Before they have known Him, their aching, sin-convicted heart can find no comfort, no repose; the world, man, sin, pleasure, all empty, all nothing. Restless and weary, desolate and dejected, they find Jesus at last; they hear of Him in the city of Nazareth, and they follow Him from Galilee; they hear of Him among those who are despised among men, among those whom the world counts foolish, and they find such a grace, such a consolation, such a joy, such a rest, such a delight in His voice of forgiving tenderness and pardoning love, that every sorrow seems chased away, every woe forgotten, every care gone like the summer wind. They are full of Jesus' grace that moment, and they can speak of nothing else; they talk of Him, not by His name,—they talk of "*Him*," as if all must know whom that "*Him*" must mean.

3. But there is one feeling which equals the pleasure of finding Him,—the agony of losing Him. When once the pardoned sinner loses the Saviour he has once found; when once, for some

great sin, the Saviour seems a little while to hide His face, the sinner has no rest till he has found where He is: "If thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him." Where is He? for I have no comfort, no joy, no ease, till I have found my Lord again. No sin, however loved, will be cherished, if it keeps that Lord away; no pleasure, however bright, will be cherished, if it keeps that Lord away. He will go everywhere, and will not be happy, till he have found Him again, till again convinced of His pardon, again comforted with His love, again able to look on Him as his Friend, again an heir of God, a joint-heir with Christ. He will suspect everything which might have possibly prevented the intercourse he used to hold; he will stand beneath the very cross, he will go to the very grave to weep, if he find Him not. Mary would have spent her life in gazing on that quiet Body, and looking at the lips which had ever spoken so kindly to her; so will the sinner give up any enjoyment on earth to be with Christ.

Such is the feeling of warmth and love which the sinner who has lately found his Saviour will ever feel towards Him.

III. Let us pass on with our story. "Jesus

saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself and saith unto Him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master." We left Mary standing before Jesus, supposing He was the gardener; her last question had been "Where have you laid Him?" Her mind, we saw, was full of sorrow. But mark the event. The supposed gardener utters one word, it was her own name—"Mary." She heard it, and how sweetly it struck upon her ear! It was the voice she loved, it was the voice of Jesus. She turned suddenly round; it was the same voice she had listened to with such delight before. *Mary!*—that tone spoke forgiveness, love, and peace; it called her wandering mind back to hope and happiness; it must be His voice. Then He had come back, and it was He who stood before her. It was her lost Master, Jesus who had been crucified, Jesus whom she sought; she turned herself, and saith unto Him, "Rabboni, Master." All was right now, her aching heart at rest; she had found her Lord; now she was again with Him; He was now again her Master, and she was happy to be His servant. How much is meant by that word "Master." No expression of joy at having found Him, no question asked as to where He had been, or whence He had come. It was enough, Jesus

stood before her, not the 'gardener. It was His voice spoke, and that voice had spoken her name, and she was happy. She only could say "Master;" that was all her voice could say. It meant all that love, delight, humility could utter. From the moment when first that voice had said those blessed words, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," she had loved it more than any other, and now it was more than balm to her wounded spirit; it told her her Lord had risen indeed, and all His promises fulfilled; and more, more than all, her name had been the first He uttered, she was the first to whom He spoke. Happy Mary, to be honoured above all the rest! So does Christ ever honour the weeping penitent who seeks Him. It is probable she fell on her knees before Him; "Rabboni" had been uttered when falling on her knees before her Master; for we find our Lord's next remark is, "Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended unto My Father; but go, tell My brethren." Her intention, seemingly, was to fall at His feet and embrace them in her arms. The excess of her delight made her only long to hold Him fast, lest she should lose Him again. But He bids her not strive to touch Him *then*, not stay to delight herself in holding Him *then*, but to haste away to His

brethren, those false, betraying, deserting friends, tell *them* He was risen, and loved them still, and forgave them all. There would be time to touch Him afterwards to her heart's content. And again ; His risen Body was of a more pure, exalted nature than His uncrucified Body, and was not to be so familiarly handled, because, although not yet gone to His Father, it was yet most holy, most sacred. Mary would fain never have left her Master again, if only she might have lived within sound of His voice. But mark His message : "I ascend to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God." How comforting to their sorrowful spirits that He still looked upon them as brethren, children of *one* Father, heirs with Him, though sinners, of eternal glory. He thought they might despair on account of their sin in forsaking Him, therefore He would cheer them by telling them that God was still their God, their Father, and their Friend, though they had proved so false and untrue.

Let me call your attention once more to the fact of Mary being the *first* to whom Jesus spoke ; as if He loved to appear to the one who most wept over sin and the loss of Him. None had been a greater sinner than she ; but she had had much forgiven, and therefore loved much. The

same forgiving tenderness is shewn to St. Peter, when the angel is bade to send the message "to the disciples and Peter" that He is risen; as though if one was to be told above the rest that blessed news, it was that sorrowing sinner who had denied his Master.

Mary was now happy again. It was well she had waited at the sepulchre, for from that she had been the first to welcome her risen Lord. Joyful were the footsteps with which she went back again to the city, to bear the glad, the happy tidings that Christ had risen again, come back again to them. Happy Mary, to be the bearer of such tidings!

IV. And now, what is the lesson we learn from this part of the sacred story? She has found her Lord; in her sorrow He has come to her, and spoken peace to her wounded soul. And shall not you also find Him, most unhappy sorrower? Can any balm be so sweet to you as the case of Mary? Can any story speak such comfort to you as this? Does it not tell you of a sinner whose sins had been of the blackest dye, received, accepted, restored, beloved, forgiven by a Saviour so merciful that eternity shall not be enough to tell the wonders of His love? Does it not tell you that if you are but truly penitent,

truly sorry, if in earnest you are seeking your Lord, you shall receive, most certainly, a full and free forgiveness, a most abundant pardon?

Are you seeking for the comforts of salvation which by your sins you have lost? are you weeping at the sepulchre of your Lord? are you only longing to repose in His arms? Then turn around and see, for Jesus stands before you. If you seek Him, truly penitent, truly earnest; if indeed you are saying, "Where is my Lord?" His voice shall in a little while strike upon your ear in accents as sweet as when it uttered the name of "Mary" to the weeping Magdalene in the garden.

But when He does so look at you, your answer must be, "Rabboni, Master; I am Thy servant, ready now to go where Thou mayest bid me, to do what Thou mayest tell me." If, indeed, you are His, of His fold, He will but speak, and you shall know His voice; "His sheep know His voice; He calleth them by name, and leadeth them out."

Mary's Saviour had risen triumphant over every enemy, and she must not doubt, nor you either; cast yourself on His care, and you shall be safe. Dare to credit all that He has spoken; dare to launch forth on to the sea of grace and

love, on which no honest soul ever suffered shipwreck ; dare to throw all your cares on Christ. Sweet shall it be to you to take refuge in His fidelity and love, when all the sorrows of this world tell you that this is not your rest. Sweet will be the work of prayer and praise, when you know Him as "the strength of your heart and your portion for ever."

When forgiven, do as Mary did ; tell others of Him ; long to ease other breaking spirits by the mention of His name. Go, tell them He is in the road to Galilee, and if they will go they may find Him there. Go, tell them *you* have found the Lord, and in Him is such joy, such peace, such relief for all sorrow, that if they be wise they will seek Him too.

Such, in following the story of Mary in the garden with Jesus, is the lesson we should learn from each point.

1. On so bright a day as this I would speak of nothing but a risen Saviour ; I could not bear to say one word to damp the joy of one returning sinner. But I must bid you remember, repentance is no easy, no light matter ; it is not being sorry to-day, and go and sin to-morrow. It is a work of many tears, much sorrow ; it was not because Mary was a sinner that she was for-

given, but because she was truly penitent, truly anxious to forsake her sin. She had shewn her sorrow by following Him from Galilee, by bearing His reproach, by serving Him as her Lord and Master; it was no momentary, passing feeling of sorrow for sin, or attachment to Christ; it was love the most devoted, attachment the most deep. Happy only with Him, she cared for nothing else, if only she might touch His feet. When He was away, no place but His tomb had any attraction for her; Jesus was *all* to Mary; and so must He be to you, if you are truly penitent. Do not, I charge you, trust to any slight feeling of sorrow for sin, and, thinking it repentance, remain quite satisfied with it, because while under it there may appear something beautiful in the character of Christ to your soul; be sure your sorrow is deep, is true, is sure, before you think you are in her place.

God knows, I would not discourage you; God knows how willingly I would lead you to Him, in whom is every comfort and every consolation. But men will deceive themselves; therefore they must be warned and cautioned. Eternity is so near, life is so uncertain, judgment is so terrible, that it were more than madness to let men deceive themselves because afraid to disappoint or hurt them.

2. Once more. Look at the courage of Mary, and take courage yourself. Bolder far than the more professing Peter, she did not tell her love, but shewed it ; she did not care for the shame from every cursing lip showered on the poor, guilty, outcast, as she passed along the city street after she had lingered around the tomb of Christ so late on the evening of His death. She cared not for the reproaches that fell on her for having followed the despised Nazarene through all His journey of love, and having washed His feet with her tears ; she feared not the Roman guard who watched around the sepulchre ; she feared not the shining angel ; she was not ashamed to shew her tears to the gardener, as she thought Him who stood beside her ; she cared not for the dark midnight hour, nor for all the dangers that might befall a follower of Christ alone at that season, but while it was yet dark she came to the sepulchre ; she minded not any reproach, but having found Him, ran with all joy and told all who loved her Lord that He was "risen indeed." While Peter trembled and feared, Mary cared for nothing ; no, she had heard Him say, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," and for such a Saviour, for such words, for such assurance, she cared for nothing, she thought of

nothing. Enough for Mary, her sin was gone ; where, then, could she live away from the sound of that voice which told her so ? Enough for Mary, heaven was open to her, and with heaven the full enjoyment of her Saviour. Enough for Mary, she had found her Lord, and why should she care for man ?

Is your courage like this ? Do you care for no danger, no ridicule, no contempt, no insult, no disgrace, so that only you may call Jesus Christ your Master ? Are you willing to bear all that she bore ? Will you cheerfully meet the unkindness of others, and the mockery of bad companions and ungodly neighbours ? You will if you feel your sins as you ought, if you feel them as Mary felt them.

3. Then with such a bright example, fear not to come boldly to God. On this day, above all others, will He hear your prayer for mercy, the day He rose triumphant over sin. Tell Him how you grieve for sin, tell Him how you would be His ; tell Him you care nothing for the world ; tell Him you have no other Saviour ; tell Him He pardoned Mary, and He will pardon you ; tell Him you will forsake sin if He will help you ; tell Him you are weak, poor, sick, and helpless ; tell Him He has promised to help you ; tell Him

He pardoned Peter, and that He promised to pardon you. There is no need for doubt, there is no need for one passing fear ; if but sincere in your repentance you shall stand with Mary, by her Lord in His own kingdom. Come to Him. It is Easter-day—the day He rose, and He cannot refuse you, He cannot turn away. Let your sins have been dark as the deepest crimson, let your good resolutions have been passing as the morning dew, it is Easter-day, and He will hear you.

It is Easter-day. Then come to His altar, His blessed yet so neglected Sacrament. Were Mary here to-day, would she turn away when He bid her come ? would the sins of her past life have kept her back from kneeling there ? Then if you would be like her, dare you, can you turn away ? She drinks the fruit of the vine with Him in His Father's kingdom now ; do you who are yet on earth come to-day and drink it here. Pour out your sins before His throne, and you shall be forgiven. “ Who shall separate you from the love of Christ ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword ? As it is written, for Thy sake we are killed all the day long ; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay in all these things

we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

SERMON XV.

THE REVERENCE DUE TO CHRIST'S BODY.

JOHN XX. 17.—*Touch Me not.*

MARY Magdalene loved Jesus much, and so on the morning of the resurrection was much favoured. She saw Christ first of all, before any other; she saw a vision of angels; Christ spoke to her,—“Mary;” she spoke to Him—“Rabboni.” All this was well, and very kind and gracious; then came a word which seemed unkind—“*Touch Me not.*” A little before she wept, and He asked her why; but this seemed enough to make her weep again. “Touch Me not.” If she wept that others had taken away her Lord, much more when her Lord would take away Himself, that she may not so much as touch Him. Now Christ came to her in two shapes, and each time He spoke; at first, unknown, as a gardener; next in His own shape and voice, known to her. The unknown voice of Christ proved better to her than when He became known to her. When

unknown He asked her why she wept, and that was kind and comforting in trouble like hers ; when He was known He grew strange on a sudden, and asked her why she came so near Him as to touch Him. It must have grieved her not to come near, and to be forbidden by His own mouth. But the two speeches agree well together—" *Weep not,*"—" *Touch Me not :*" to rejoice at His rising, but do it with reverence. There are two parts of His speech, the denial—" *Touch Me not,*" and the order—" *Go, tell My disciples :*" and this latter has been called Mary Magdalene's Gospel ; it was the first preaching of glad tidings after He rose. But of the denial.

No sooner had He risen, and His voice sounded in her ears, than she knew Him straight—" *Master,*" and probably leant forward in her surprise to lay hold of Him. But He forbade her. Yet the act of touching Him seemed slight.

Of the words, first, "*Touch not.*" To "*touch Him,*" we know, was a great thing, "*there went virtue out of Him.*" Many strove to touch Him, and this while He ministered. Now He had risen, greater would be the value of a touch. But it was from pure love, not for aught she could get, she wished to touch Him. And then the Person :—it seemed strange not to touch *Christ* ;

He let Himself be touched often enough before ; He let the rude multitude throng Him, and not long since they buffeted Him ; and now He may not be touched. Then, too, it was especially strange in Mary's case ; she touched Him enough a little while since : she washed His feet with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Even that morning she brought odours for His Body. She had come far to Him, early in the morning, wept rivers of tears, would not be frightened by the angels, it seemed hard *she* might not touch Him.

Then the reason He gave for it was still more strange :—"for I am not yet ascended." That would seem the very reason of all others for touching Him, since then she could never touch Him again.

Now we must remark that the foundation of the old world began with an order not to touch a good thing—"Touch not the tree of knowledge." And this rising of Christ was like a new creation, the resurrection of the body. This too began with the forbidding to touch what was good—"Touch Me not ;" touch not Me, the very tree of life. The reason of this forbidding must have been on Christ's part or Mary's. It was not on Christ's part, for He could receive no

hurt ; for a little while after He let St. Thomas touch Him. Then it must have been on Mary's part. Besides, He said to the disciples, " Handle Me, and see that it is I Myself." Was it, then, that He would have men touch Him and not women ? Far from it, for certain women met Him in the garden, and did touch Him. Then was it only good people who might, and not one who had been so great a sinner as Mary ? Far from it, for she had been one of the company of women who did touch Him. Then Mary did touch Him, and yet might not. This seems stranger still..

We have found these three things : 1. The touch must not be given there ; 2. Mary must not touch Him as she is, but may afterwards ; 3. It is not *never touch*, but *touch not now*.

Now there are three opinions about this, which all stand well together : 1, that He said it to Mary because there was a want of reverence in her manner. She had been used to speaking to Him easily, to calling Him Master ; she remembered the scene of Lazarus' grave, and the house where she sat at His feet and Martha served ; she thought He was as then ; she forgot, or knew not, that His body was now glorified, no longer as it was, it had put on its immortality,

and must be treated with a higher reverence. She treated Him, not as one just ascending, but as He used to be, a Being going to die. He was so no longer; now incorruptible was His corruption, immortal His mortal body. For His glorified Body St. Thomas's words were better: "My Lord and my God!" not simply Master. So we learn that when we do not reverence Christ enough, He will not let us touch Him. And it is no excuse to say, love made her do it. Love is what Christ loves, but St. Paul says, "Love doth nothing amiss," and our love should always keep us respectful. Her great joy made her forget herself; afterwards she might touch Him, as she did, when she had learnt her lesson well. So we may not approach Christ under a strong passion, but with a quiet, calm mind, a reverence mixed with our love, or we shall not have the full blessing from Him we might.

There is one difficulty yet in this explanation: others touched Him, less guilty than she,—Thomas, who would not believe,—but their fault was different; they did not know it was Christ, thought it was a spirit; she knew well; touching was the very medicine for their disease, not so for hers; she ought not to have needed the rebuke.

We learn, then, that there are some things,

not in themselves wrong or harmful, but most holy, which we may not touch, like the eye in the body. Now men often heed not this rebuke ; men will dive into God's great and secret things, will know and determine more than He is willing to tell. They come near God with an unholy hand, and make disputes among each other about counsels of His He has not pleased to tell us of. Surely this is a worse touching than Mary's, and needs a like rebuke. Her fault was small ; but if even she needed the rebuke, how much more those who touch Him far more violently than she did ! Uzzah was killed for irreverently touching the ark ; how much more those who with real intentional irreverence touch Christ ! And when more than in irreverently taking the Sacrament ? I know not how many would handle Christ if they had Him on earth, since they handle so irreverently that most Him here, Himself in the Sacrament, for men take and eat that very often with unclean lips and unholy hearts. And it seems as if Christ had spoken this expressly for our learning. Touch Me not irreverently ; take Me not up save with fear and caution ; be not easy, or too sure. But yet He says not, Touch Me not at all, for Mary touches Him presently ; but wait, and gain a right spirit, then touch Me, then

come and take Me, as you will. And this was good caution for to-day. I know well many rather read the words to Thomas—come and touch Me, “reach hither thy hand ;” but many read the other too, “Touch Me not.” Now this peculiarly suits Easter, for this reason : so many come on Easter-day to take Him who never come the year round besides. And this is a very good reason to think they come not as they ought, and need this check, “Touch Me not.” Different reasons may make them only come now, and not at other times ; but all need a check.

1. Perhaps you feel your life is not strict enough in general to come and receive it ; that you live too much for the world, or pleasure, or business, to give up your whole hearts to that. But you will not give it up altogether, because it is a habit, and an old custom with you. Indeed you need a “touch Me not ;” and I warn you, if such be your only reason, think awhile before you come to-day, or the taking of the holy Sacrament may be nothing else but increasing your damnation.

What ! is that heart fit to touch Christ and take Him which says, I will live more easily and inconsistently than I know He wishes me ; I will be worldly ; I must have more pleasure ; I must

be engrossed in business, despite of His saying, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." But still I fear little to take the Sacrament, so I come once a year. This is indeed serving God and the world too ; and what saith Christ ? "Ye cannot serve two masters." If this is not doing it I know not what is. Dare you take Christ in that Sacrament when you are living in one conscious inconsistency, however small ? If so, I wonder you do not tremble at His angry frown and words—"Touch Me not." I say to you, Touch Him not, I beg ; go home, and think awhile ; come not to so solemn a thing from mere old custom. *Then and there* Christ needs *all your heart*. You who stay away on all other occasions, I charge you, come not now.

2. But do you stay away because of the trouble ? It would seem strange that any should, yet I well believe some do. It interferes with their pleasure and ease on Sunday ; they cannot spare the time. But they come to-day to make up for past neglect,—once a year ! I think to you Christ will say, If you cannot find time to touch Me always, touch Me not now : I am no person to be trifled with. And this is but sorry respect, which can pay more attention to pleasure for all the year, and to Me only on Easter-day.

You who stay away for that reason, come not now ; it will do you more harm than good. Mary found time, and glad enough she was to find Him and touch Him, at the house at Bethany, at Simon the Pharisee's, at the cross, and at the tomb. And yet, for all that, she might not touch Him without great reverence. I think those who never find time for Him save this once, had better touch Him not, lest they receive within them a burning fire. His holy Body will have no equal ; you must give Him all or none : I do assure you you do yourself no good by coming to-day, if this is the reason why you come *only to-day*.

So some say, I come not, because coming often takes away from the value of the Sacrament. He never said so to her ; He never said she came too often for Him ; for at the house, the cross, and the tomb, He was glad to see her. He meant not, come not at all, but mind how you come ; you cannot come too often for that which is real strength and food for the undying soul.

But there are others to whom I might say, Touch Him not, not only on Easter-day. Do not some of you come with a careless heart ? I have often charged and urged you to come ; but I never said come, and go on coming, whether you are leading a strict life or not. Per-

haps you did not use to come, and have begun, and, when you began, considered carefully of it, and hoped to lead a more godly life, and have now gone on coming without the godly life, coming as a custom. I warn you against this; it is your highest duty to *prepare yourself to come*. How is your life spent in the interval? do you live differently from the world? is your temper subdued and calm? do you often dwell on your sin? is your time spent in prayer? do you gradually draw out of the world? do you take your trials as God's chastisements, patiently, prayerfully? See to this, lest He meet you with "Touch Me not;" and remember there is this awful thought—she heard Him say, "Touch Me not," and so was spared the fault. You will not hear Him speak to-day; you will come near and take Him, perhaps unworthily; you will have no warning till He comes at the last resurrection, and then you will meet Him, and when you see Satan treating for your soul, and hear God's dreadful judgment of your soul, you will cling to Jesus Christ to save you, and He will say, "Touch Me not;" "I never knew you." And so when He says "Touch Me not," He never says "Come to Me" again; those who are forbidden then, never have a hope of meeting Him afterwards, like Mary by-and-bye in the

garden. Touch not then, and you touch Him never.

One word to those who never seek to take Him at all. How shall you cling to Him at that judgment, when you have never touched His Sacrament now? If Mary, with all her love, and zeal, and ardour, needed a rebuke, how much more you, who have no ardour at all? who can see Him, and know Him to be the risen Christ, and yet turn away? who can hear Him say, "Do this in remembrance of Me," and yet say, I will not do it? Oh a very terrible rebuke will yours be then! Will He not say, You who never took Me then, depart from Me now for ever?

But Mary Magdalene's intentions were all good; true,—here is the difference. Even good penitents sometimes come to the Sacrament without enough reverence; they come without sufficient prayer and examination, or with a troubled soul, full of anxiety and disturbing thoughts. Beware of this. The bird flies not in the stormy sky, but nestles its tired wing till the storm be lulled. Calm your soul from this world's storm, and calm and quiet it will rise and nestle in the bosom of Jesus.

SERMON XVI.

THE RESURRECTION.

CHRIST THE FIRSTFRUITS.—THE BODY'S IDENTITY.—ITS STATE
AFTERWARDS.

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and becomes the firstfruits of them that slept.—1 COR. XV. 20.

WE are told among the tales of the resurrection that two disciples went to Emmaus, a village. Very sad they were after Christ's death,—Emmaus means "a people forlorn:" and so truly were they, forlorn and hopeless without Christ. But on that same journey they found comfort, they found Christ had risen; they were no longer a people forlorn, but a people comforted. And this word, "Going to Emmaus," became a proverb, to mean "having lost one's hopes." And so we may well liken this world to it; for "if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." 'This journey through life is a

journey to Emmaus, except it be for the resurrection,—that makes it a happy journey, and that only,—it has no hope without that. And plainly why: we are always losing some one or some thing we loved and cared about, which we shall join hereafter, and which we shall never see again without the resurrection.

So the resurrection is a lesson of comfort. Now we are taught that all this resurrection and comfort is *through Christ*—He rising, we rise; not one without the other. He is the firstfruits of the resurrection; and there is strong force in the expression ‘firstfruits.’ This day under the Law was the day of the firstfruits. Under the Law they might not eat the firstfruits of the earth so long as they were profane. All the sheaves of the field were unholy: one sheaf was taken out of the rest, and was called the firstfruits. That one was lifted up before the Lord in the name of the rest, and so made holy; then all the sheaves of the field were made holy by it —“If the firstfruits be holy, the lump also is holy.”

We were all dead—dead sheaves; one of *us*, Christ, this day was like a sheaf taken out of the number of the dead, and in the name of the rest lifted up from the grave. And in His rising, all

the rest of us dead sheaves had a right to rise, and were made holy.

Such is the meaning of the firstfruits, the first ripe sheaf, taken out of all the dead ones. And being so, all the rest wait the day of harvest ; full of hope, they stand in the harvest field, the sun having set, and wait the coming angels, the reapers, who shall on a sudden come over all the field in the morning—the everlasting morning.

And now mark this—the change which this making the firstfruits holy creates. St. Paul says, “Christ is risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.” Of whom ? We should expect of them that are dead. But not so ;—“of them that sleep.” So His rising changes death into sleep. And the word ‘death,’ in the verse which speaks of His resurrection, is changed into ‘sleep’ before you reach its end ; burial is changed into taking rest, graves into beds, death into sleep, dead men into men laid down to take their rest—“If they sleep they shall do well.”

So we see the comfort of the resurrection, and the reason of it. The comfort of it, that it makes life no longer a journey to Emmaus, a way of sorrows, but one of hope, a going to meet again ; and the reason, through Christ the firstfruits, the

Maker of sleep and rest : “ Come unto Me, and I will give you rest.”

And there are many to whom this would give hope ; and indeed, each Easter, Easter becomes more happy ; it sheds light on more scenes of sorrow than we first knew of ; it was always a bright day to us, but at first we scarce knew why ; we heard it was so, and others were happy in it, and there was a joy about its lessons : but now *we* feel its brightness, we know it ; we have travelled to Emmaus since then, gone to the village of the forlorn, and having done so, then Easter-day sheds her rays on the dark journey. It always had them, but we did not know them, because we did not know the sorrow.

Man does not know the joy of messages from home till he is far from it,—his circumstances draw out their value. We do not value blessings till they are gone, and then when they come back how we love them ! new powers have been struck out of them by thinking of them past.

If friends could come back who have died, how much more we think we should love them than we *did*. The darker the night, the brighter the stars ; the wilder the tempest, the stiller the calm. In fact, there is not more *in* these things, not more love in the love of the lost, nor more bright-

ness in the stars on a dark night, but circumstances draw them out in new ways, and help us to see it as we never did before. So Easter,—we know it better because our sad journeys have been oftener; we love it more because it has been a refuge to us; we love it, blessed Easter, because we have come by degrees to Thee through days of affliction, through ways of sorrow; we are more and more by degrees solitary travellers, travelling on alone, life having lost its quiet cheerfulness, (we have before us many scenes of death,) going alone, perhaps two having conversation one with another as they walk, and are sad. And it draws towards evening, and the day is far spent, we go in to tarry, and blessed Easter becomes our resting-place; and while we tarry, behold Christ is with us, full of hope. As we sit, our eyes are opened, and we know Him; and it is no longer a journey to Emmaus, a way of the forlorn, but a way of hope, and we rise up and return to Jerusalem, and find them gathered together awaiting us.

We considered the state of the dead, and something about the resurrection a short while since. Let us continue it, it being very well suited to Easter, and most important to do so, as so soon we shall have a part in it all.

Now one doctrine very full of comfort and importance, having to do with the rising again, is that we shall rise with the *same* body. The same body which died shall be raised again ; the same flesh which was by dying divided from the soul, the same tabernacle which was dissolved, shall be raised again ; the same temple that was destroyed shall be rebuilt, and no other. And this has doctrines very important attached to it.

Job says, "Though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh"—in *flesh*, shewing reality ; in *my* flesh, shewing whose, his same flesh—"shall I see God : whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another," or a stranger eye.

"He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken our mortal body." Now here is a likeness drawn between the manner of Christ's resurrection and ours ; and we know His was the *same flesh*, for the very wounds were there which had been there before. "He shall quicken our *mortal* bodies ;" that is, the very bodies which *were mortal*, no other body : the *same* shall be raised, only *immortal* ; "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." This *corruptible*, this *mortal*, is the same body which died, because mortal,

and is corrupted ; *that* same one shall be only altered in its powers, raised again unable to die.

The very name of resurrection shews this ; for what rises again ? A man dies, and shall rise ; —what shall rise ? not the spirit, or soul, for that went up at once. Something which had fallen was to rise ; that, then, must be *the body*. The man falls and dies, not in respect of his spirit, but his flesh ; and so only that can be said to rise again. And because no other flesh fell at his death, no other body died but his own, therefore he cannot rise again but in his own flesh ; he must revive in his own body.

Again, the place from which the dead shall come :—“They which sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake.” “They which are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth.” “The sea shall give up the dead which are in it.” If the *same* bodies were not raised again, the sea and the earth would not give up their bodies. The grave—each particular grave—can only give up the body which is in it, no other. Therefore the same body which is buried shall at the last day rise. For we are all to appear at once “before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”

The good shall be rewarded and the bad punished. That which will receive it is not the soul only, but the body too. He who sinned in the body will be punished in *that* body,—in no other, no new one. The wicked He will destroy, body and soul, in hell; but they who glorified God in their body shall be glorified by Him in body and spirit; for they are both bought with a price, and that which is bought with Christ's blood cannot be gone to nothing. The bodies of Christ's saints are always members of Christ; these bodies we now have; and do you think they can remain in death? Surely not. "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in us,"—as He does, and by so doing makes our bodies His temples,—“He who raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken our mortal bodies by His Spirit which dwelleth in us.”

Then another reason there is, from the bodies which never went through death, as Elijah and Enoch; and also in the case of those whom Christ shall find alive at His coming, whom He shall not kill, but change. “The dead in Christ shall rise first;” then “they which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; so shall we

be ever with the Lord." If those who are alive shall go up in the same bodies, those who have died will. They will both appear alike "before the Judge of quick and dead;" otherwise, the saints who will be with God and the Lamb for ever, would be strangely different, some appearing with their bodies and others not.

Then, lastly, those who were raised arose in the *same* bodies, the widow's son, and the Shunammite's, and Lazarus, all the *same* bodies. Then when Christ died "the bodies of the saints which slept arose and came out of their graves:" surely the same bodies which were laid in. And these were all *meant* to be examples of our resurrection. And so too of Christ, who said, "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself." And as "He shall change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto His glorious body," we shall be the same, and be able to say of ourselves then, "Behold, it is I myself." The body will be the same, only changed in condition. And at this resurrection all will rise, both just and unjust.

Now there are several things to draw from this.

This sameness of the body makes us believe we shall know each other after the resurrection.

The dead raised were the same entirely, so as to be known by their friends, there was sameness in face, sameness in expression and all parts ; but most of all, Christ's resurrection, being the exact likeness of ours, becomes a strong argument here. His Body which rose was the same, and was known well ; it took a few moments to remember His face, but having scanned it a moment, and hearing His voice, they knew Him ; perhaps taking that little time which we should to recall the features of one who had been chastened by sorrow since last we saw him, or had gone through a joyful change, or had grown older and wiser, and we did not expect to see him. The change of the resurrection may produce all this. Other reasons there are for this, such as the promise that the saints of Christ will Christ bring with Him, which would not be mentioned if it were not a subject of great comfort. David's child, too, is a reason, in his assurance that he would meet him, and surely recognise him, which was the ground of his comfort.

Then, too, the sameness of the body gives us some idea of the state of it in joy and sorrow afterwards ; that will be to a certain degree bodily joys and pains, though increased in so intense a degree as to be quite beyond what we can con-

ceive here at all. The actual member which has sinned will be tormented there, and the torment may be of the same nature, though far exceeding what we know of here, as bodily torment on earth. It is likely that the body will suffer for the body's sins. And the joys of heaven will be far exceeding any of our joys here through sense, yet perhaps of something the same nature. Perhaps our joys here, our highest, are the faintest types of what will be; and our delight in scenes of loveliness, our yearning after the scenes we cannot fully take in, the calm of twilight, the sad tone of sunset, the floating of passing music, the lashings of the sea, and the silence of the everlasting hills, (things we love and long after, but cannot fully take in,) all these shall find their full reality there. We shall see, we shall hear, we shall feel, the realities of which these are shadows, and be satisfied. God will satisfy *all*; He will be truly "all in all;" and we shall find all we have yearned after here, know its true object, its lasting home, in God. There is a pain about all such things here, because we feel there is something beyond them we cannot reach. There, in *heaven*, in our renewed bodies, we shall have that void filled, and be at rest.

We cannot tell exactly what the joys and sor-

rows of the body may be ; they may be of the same kind, or not ; at least the body will suffer for the body's sins, and will be very happy if we have loved Christ. So that when we sin in the body, let us think of the agony that member will feel which did sin here ; when we feel pain, let us think of the bodily pain of eternity. Let us mortify the body, kill it from earthly pleasures, that it may get ready to be for ever enjoying the glory of heaven.

Again ; men may say, What will be the state of the body when it rises ? Will the young be still young, the old still old, the chastened still different to the simple ? God knows. But His kingdom there may be a system, as here,—a vast, glorious system ; and in it there may be need of various kinds. There may be places in heaven which only infants can fill, others which only the highly chastened can occupy. Each age may find its due place there ; and as each place needs filling up in paradise, or heaven, God may remove one of His own from earth to fill it. There is no rivalry there ; we shall not care there which of us will be accounted greatest ; our highest happiness will be to fill *the* place God wants us to fill ; we shall only care to do His work ; the lower will not envy the higher, the higher

will not oppress the lower ; he who is over “ten cities” will be as happy as he who is over five. *Here* every age fills its own due place in Christ’s Church, and they may *there*, after the resurrection. Why not ? Angels do so : some are archangels, some angels, some seraphs—angels of love, as children are to men—all love. Yet who envies the other there ? Equally happy was the bright seraph who folded his radiant wing before the barred gate of paradise as the great archangel who stood before God’s throne. Equally happy he who followed the paths of trial and lonely life—one of Christ’s little ones—as he who was sent from the golden throne to comfort Him, the Comforter of all. Equally happy the herald who told of the birth at Bethlehem, with the unnumbered host who hovered in his midnight train, though his was the herald voice of Christ, and theirs the thousand echoes of his song. What care they ? they are doing their heavenly Father’s will, and to do that is happiness, to stand in their allotted place perfect joy. They measure not happiness there by degrees, but by obedience ; and so perhaps we : we shall all find our own place in the perfect harmony of government : the martyr will have his blood-bought throne, the long chastened his own enjoyment of Christ ; the pilgrim of

a shorter and less tedious way will think it no loss to stand and gaze on the Lamb through the lines of the countless of the firstborn; and infants and little children find perfect peace in raising their own eternal hymns of love. All will be happy there, all glorious, every body robed in immortality; a kingdom without a sin, a harmony without a moment's discord for ever. Happiness will be happiness: the simple will be simple still, the long-chastened may wear his thoughtful forehead still; one temple, raised in a boundless eternity; one unanimous choir, glorifying for ever one Being; a company of souls ravished in contemplation of Christ; an army of triumphant soldiers, laying their honours down at the feet of the Captain of their salvation; myriads of immortal glorified bodies standing in exactest order, with every eye gazing with intense rapture on His bloodless wounds which purchased their salvation.

SERMON XVII.

THE RESURRECTION.—HISTORICAL.

The Lord is risen indeed.—LUKE xxiv. 34.

THE week of sorrows has passed away, and the day of joy has broken in upon us; sorrow has been in the night, but joy has come in the morning.

We have followed Him through His “hour,” His week of sorrows; He was a Man of sorrows, and we have become acquainted with His grief.

We have worn our sorrowing garment, we have walked with Him, we have been by His side from Bethany, in Gethsemane, in the judgment-hall, and at the cross; we have felt His wounded Hand upon us, and we have loved it; it has left on us the mark of blood, and we are loath to leave it; we have gazed on His face of pain, worn out for our sakes, and we leave it with a sigh. There is something in sorrow which suits our state; we *are sorrowers* here, no doubt, children away from home, captives sighing for liberty. Lent

and Holy-week have more to do with *us* than Easter. . Our toil up hill, our many temptations, our sore trials, our inward struggles, make us rather be with Jesus, going by His side, hearing His word of comfort, standing at His cross. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee."

But we are called on now to rejoice. It is our duty, and it shall be our delight; we will still keep near Him, lest we fall; still keep the sound of His warning voice in our mind, the voice of His Passion,—“Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation;” “Satan hath desired to have thee.”

I will first speak of the resurrection, as we did on Palm-Sunday of Passion-week, and on Good-Friday evening of the crucifixion. St. Peter, St. John, and Mary,—we saw them through all His sufferings, we find them still at the tomb, altered and chastened, yet still the same,—St. John’s calm, holy love; St. Peter’s daring warmth; Mary’s devoted affection, even to death.

When He was buried, the two Marys watched where He was laid, and sat by the tomb, as if they had lost all they cared for on earth.

His had been the only word which spoke kindly to "the woman who was a sinner," or gave her a hope of pardon. He was gone, and where should she be but at His silent grave, where the world was buried to her, and she to the world? The apostles had all fled, and were scattered. It seems likely they had gone back to Bethany, and lodged where they had lived with Jesus; perhaps passed again and alone that walk over Mount Olivet, and by the withered, barren tree, so like Jerusalem. Sad must have been that Sabbath-day to them.

1. At the earliest dawn, just as the Saturday had passed away, the first party of women set out from Bethany, having been up all night to get ready the things to embalm His Body. Little rest had they; their whole soul was bent on Him; whether they should ever see Him again here or not was perhaps to them more than half a doubt. Be that as it may, they loved that Body. They had had no time to embalm it, from the hurried burial, and they could not do it on the Sabbath, for they could not get into the garden. The embalming of Nicodemus had been slight, merely wrapping the Body, and her Lord had said that Mary's would be the unction before burial. These poor women shewed more

practical love for Him than the disciples; they had fled for sorrow, and had lost all courage; only one was at the cross and two at the condemnation. The women had followed Him along the way of sorrows, the women were standing by the cross, the women were present to embalm His body, and cheerfully set out from Bethany while it was yet night; that walk—the barren tree by the road-side—would not give them the agony it would have given the disciples. St. Peter must have felt that that barren tree was like himself—perhaps he did.

It seems two parties of women agreed to meet at the tomb to finish the embalming, the one the party of Salome, the other of Johanna. They had to start from different quarters, one from Bethany, the other from Jerusalem.

2. While they were on their road, in the dead of night, the two angels came down from heaven, and the earthquake took place in the garden; the angels go into the garden straight, bright and shining, to find their Lord, whom heaven missed and loved; and they rolled the stone from the sepulchre, and Jesus rose from the dead. The angels took the place He had left, always ready to do what He bid them, and glad to be employed by Him, be it what it

may,—whether to sit down and guard the tear He shed upon Mount Olivet,—where, perhaps, one guards it now, and counts it his holy work,—or whether to go back with Him to heaven; enough for them, it is for Jesus.

They take His place, and sit down, the one at the head, the other at the foot, to wait who should come, in majestic silence, to tell the world that He was gone. The earth could not hold Him, nor death: the grave had been conquered, He could not be holden of it; earth and heaven joined to make Him rise: the earth opened from beneath, and from heaven came the angels. The angels probably sat three hours before any one came. Jesus had risen six hours; we are not told whither He went. May He have walked in the garden, seen the holy city lie beneath Him, sleeping in the moonlight, given over? May He have prayed for her final victory? May He have thought of us? May He have prayed to His Father, as He used to do at night in His day of suffering? or have talked together with the angels, while they were gazing and adoring? We know not; He was no longer suffering now; there is an awful grandeur thrown round His risen Body; the melting tenderness of the last scene has passed away,—

now it was "Touch Me not;" no more the exceeding sorrow of "Verily I say unto you, One of you shall betray Me," or the agony of death.

3. At six, i.e. sunrise, the first party of women reached the tomb. The stone was gone. They left it on Friday night. They thought the Body had been taken away. Mary Magdalene, the youngest of the party, is sent back to tell St. Peter and St. John; the other two, waiting for her, walk close up to the tomb—"Mary, the mother of James, and Salome, who had brought sweet spices that they might come and anoint Him." They see the angels, and they tell them, "Be not afraid; ye seek Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified." What grandeur! "He is risen, He is not here: behold the place where they laid Him. Go your way; tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see Him, as He said. And they went out quickly, neither said anything to any man, for they were afraid."

4. While they were on their road, the watch, hearing the alarm, hurry to the city, and make their report. This was while the two women were leaving the tomb, "when they were going."

5. The tomb was now again silent, and the two angels still sitting in silence. At last the

other party of women arrive, not having met Mary Magdalene in the city, and they enter. They could not find the Body, and they were perplexed. Then the angels appeared.

6. After they were gone, probably about nine in the morning, Mary Magdalene had reached Bethany, and found St. Peter and St. John, and came back with them to the tomb. Now we have the disciples again, the deep, calm, loving one, and the earnest, warm-hearted one. How different their conduct! They come from Bethany, run past the road they had walked with Him before, run past the barren tree, into the garden, full of anxious wonder as to what had happened to His Body. St. John outran St. Peter—"the disciple whom Jesus loved," as he delights to call himself, his own blessed name. He stooped down and looked in, yet went he not in:—so like his reverence and careful respect for all that belonged to Jesus, whom he, with his thoughtful mind, knew was God. Then cometh St. Peter, following him, and went in:—so like his earnest warmth, burning, heedless love, intense affection for the man,—“the man Christ Jesus.” St. John loved God, and feared; St. Peter loved the man, and feared not.

7. St. Peter and St. John go away, and Mary

is left alone. She drew near ; all had been but she ; yet who loved Him more than Mary ? She loved much, had washed His feet with tears, had stood at the cross, had sat outside the tomb on Friday night, why might not she see where that Body had lain ? All have gone ; and alone, trembling, and full of love, like a penitent, she drew near the tomb, the last, but loving more than all, except perhaps "the disciple whom Jesus loved." Poor Mary ! she had had much forgiven. "Then the disciples went away again to their own home ;" St. John to care for the blessed Virgin, His mother ; St. Peter to go on weeping in solitude. Christ was gone, they knew not whither ; they had enough to do at home ; they had seen the tomb.

"But Mary stood without at the sepulchre, weeping ; as she wept she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre. She saw the angels" in white, sitting still, sitting here these many hours, waiting in majesty and silence to answer all questions about Him who was their Lord, and then to fly back again to heaven when their work was done. At least they could tell a better tale of Him than other angels, for all whom they saw in that visit to earth were poor penitents weeping after Christ.

They spoke to Mary, as to the rest, "Woman, why weepest thou? She saith to them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." And when she had thus said she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing behind her, her Master, up and risen, seen by none yet, for hours walking in the garden, and was now come back to the tomb. And why first appear to Mary? She "saw Jesus standing"—His first appearance. The angels said no more: *He* was there. Mary, taking Him to be the gardener, said, "Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away. Take Him away, and carry Him to some still spot where I will watch Him, and live by Him, and die by Him." That Body which she so loved when living, her only care on earth now, give her *that*, and she will be satisfied. She could sit and be absorbed in gazing at those still features, as they settled one by one in death, gaze on that eye which looked at her when all men frowned, and those close, pale lips which said she was forgiven. "Jesus said, 'Mary.' Mary turned herself and said, 'Rabboni.'" That voice, that old tone, could she forget it? It might say anything, and wrapped up in sorrow

she might not remember it ; but when it said, " Mary," the name it had said before, the sound of which had never left her mind,—*" Mary,"* her own name, that tone which, sleeping and waking, had been her dream and thought, she must know *that*. Happy Mary, restored to Christ, restored to all ! Would that we were never happy without Him ! would that when we have offended Him we were miserable, and were eager to come and take His Body at the Lord's Supper, as the sweetest, best memorial of His presence. Take that now He is away ; take that till He come. Where is it, that I may take it ? Here, to-day. She did not know Him till He spoke ; she was turned away, weeping. His voice did all ; one word, one single word from Him, and she was ready to give up life itself—" she turned." He calls you to-day ; will you turn to Him ?

8. At about eleven o'clock that day, when the midday meal of the Jews was over, after Salome had come back, and also St. Peter, but before Mary Magdalene had reached Bethany, (and therefore they had not heard of His having been seen as yet,) Cleopas and one other set out to Emmaus ; our Lord overtook them as they walked along the road ; where He had been, whence He had come, they knew not. He was

now here, now there ; living now less by human rule ; holding close intercourse with Heaven ; no more so mixed up with men alone, doing His Father's work unseen, unknown, perhaps with angels walking with Him, though they—blessed beings—rather did His work than communed with Him. Things were changed ; before, men might do what they would with Him, talk with Him, question Him ; Mary might weep upon His feet ; now it was “ *Touch Me not.*” At Emmaus they ate the evening meal (three o'clock), where they knew Him in breaking of bread, as we at the Holy Communion. “ He vanished out of their sight.”

9. Between His vanishing from them at Emmaus and their coming back, He appeared to St. Peter alone, the third time to-day. We learn from this appearance that St. Peter was to order the disciples to leave Bethany, and go to live henceforth at Jerusalem, which they did directly, and took the room of the Last Supper.

When the two returned from Emmaus, we are told, they found them at Jerusalem, and this was the reason. The appearance to St. Peter must have happened at this time, for when He appeared that evening to them all, He had already seen St. Peter, as they said, “ The Lord is risen.” His movements were quick and solitary. Where

He met St. Peter we know not ; His very walk had some deep meaning now.

10. Soon after the two had come back, about seven o'clock, He appeared to the ten gathered together in Jerusalem, where He had ordered them to be. He no longer came to lead them there, as He had from Bethany before. St. Thomas was absent.

11. Eight days after, He appeared again with Thomas. This was the fifth time. Then to all the apostles, as 1 Cor. xv. 5.

12. Some days after, He appeared to Salome and the other Mary, and told them to bid His disciples go to Galilee, where He would meet them. We know not where He was in the interval.

13. They go, and He meets them, and a large body of believers gathered together.

14. After this He appeared to seven disciples on the sea of Galilee, the old haunt. How it must have recalled days gone by !

15. Then He appeared to James, probably to tell them to return to Jerusalem, where we find they all were. And lastly,—

16. The ascension. He met them at Jerusalem ; He took them out, His old walk, over the Mount of Olives, past the barren fig-tree ; led them as far as to Bethany, and was taken from

them ; as if to revive all their feelings about Him, and recall them to the days of His Ministry, His dying, His rising, the last sad walk to Jerusalem, the Supper where Mary wept and Martha served, the village, Lazarus, and Mary, and Martha.

We cannot but be struck with the change in everything : the mysterious silence, the rapid movements, the long intervals, the few things said, the awe which hung around His risen Body, the altered disciples, so calm, so bold, so obedient. The disciples of the Last Supper were the bishops of the Catholic Church ; and the sad chamber of parting, and weeping, and sorrow, became the scene of the earliest council of the Church of Jesus.

And now we have followed Him through all His sufferings and His resurrection, and His appearing again, what do we learn, what should we feel to-day ?

Easter-day ! blessed, glorious day ! is it not remembered in heaven ? do not the saints mention it in paradise ? does not the angels' everlasting song catch a new echo, take up a new energy, to-day, as they gaze on Him who was pierced and rose again, and burst out afresh in that eternal hymn which rolls on for ever and for ever ?

Easter-day ! blessed day ! we are not so fit to keep it as they are, yet God has permitted us. Lent and sorrow have more to do with us, yet we may rejoice. We deserve Lent, we *must* have it ; we deserve no Easter, yet we *may* have it, and Jesus tells us we may come and rejoice with Him. He called Mary, the sinner ; Peter, who denied Him ; Thomas, who had disbelieved Him, to stand around His risen Body—a glorious, blessed band ; as if He said, If they come, you may come too. Voices are they, echoes to us, of the sweet words which spoke from Bethlehem, and spoke from Calvary, and from the broken tomb, “ *Come unto Me.*” The same words, though strung to a different measure ; the same words, though struck from another harp ; the same words, the same tones, whether glad seraphs struck the lyre in the hour of His birth, or weeping angels in the garden of agony, or silent bright ones in the tomb. All, all alike in the burden, however differently strung the tune—“ *Come unto Me.*”

Easter-day ! He rose again ! Then we shall. Morning of comfort to the widow—it speaks of re-union beyond the tomb, and sheds the year’s brightest morning upon the dark stillness of a husband’s grave.

It sings a sweet song of hope to parents who

miss from their side the children they have lost, telling them of a home where families never separate, and where the severed wreath is bound once more.

It comforts the orphan. We shall see our father yet again, and again look on the mother that bore us.

It melts the hard turf that covers our brother's face; we shall see him yet again.

It comes forth with a tale of comfort from the wife without whose smile of love our house is left unto us desolate.

It tells us, you and I, who have spent so many hours together in thinking of the concerns of another world, that our trials will be mastered at last, the toilsome journey have an end; and that you and I, Christ grant it, shall meet once again in heaven: and having met, it is for ever.

And you, little children, whose less tried footsteps are beginning to ascend the hard rough hill, blessed Easter has its song for you; only go on, and keep near to Jesus, and you will yet walk together after awhile in the happy land, when the toilsome journey is over, and the cold dark river crossed.

SERMON XVIII.

EASTER JOY.—THE PRINT OF THE CROSS.

THE INNOCENT AND THE PENITENT,—THEIR JOY.

Come, see the place where the Lord lay.—MATT. xxviii. 6.

THE week of sorrows is over, and Lent's six weeks of sorrow too, and we have lived to another Easter, and we are bid to rejoice. But the past week has unstrung our harps for that purpose; we have tuned them to sorrow, and find it suits us; we had almost felt our song of joy was not to come till heaven. We are like men waked up too early, to be about again before the day has broken or the sun risen; the moon is yet in the sky.

We are *sinner*s still, and we have felt our sins somewhat deeper of late; and if sinners, sorrowers. Sin and sorrow are kindred words, twin thoughts. We cannot well "carry our bed" till we have heard Him say, "Thy sins are forgiven thee."

The last week, Bethany, the Mount of Olives,

the oft-trodden path, the barren tree, the large upper room, Gethsemane, the crown of thorns, the rough cross, the scourging and buffeting, the yielding up the Ghost, the quiet tomb,—they are things which have fitted us to weep; they have taught us sorrow; we have only just got into the way of being sad; we had only just caught the habit; they had become accustomed scenes to us, and we were getting to feel one with “the twelve,” the family of Bethany, the women at the cross and tomb. “I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”

But it is sometimes our discipline to rejoice; chastened joy is not easy; calm, moderate joy is part of the narrow way; and such is Easter. So it was to the disciples: so it is to us. Their joy was marked by little drawbacks; it was a Christian’s joy on earth, very sobered. True, they had Him, but they might not touch Him; true, they had the broken sepulchre, but there was the mount of ascension coming; true, they were again at Bethany with Him, but “when He had led them out as far as to Bethany, a cloud received Him out of their sight;” their Master had triumphed over the Jews, but the Jews never saw

Him again, they did; they again heard His voice, saw His face, and gazed upon His eye, but His Body was glorious, awful, holy, above them. There was a "*Touch Me not*" about it all, a check, a severity, a pain, a sorrow, in their very joy, a bitter herb in their feast, a mark of the cross, a print of the nails in the risen Body, a mark of the Head in the empty sepulchre.

The fact is, our lesson of Easter is chastened joy. There are many Easter lessons; this is one,—the true joy of the Christian is chastened. Let us learn the lesson; it will fall in with our tone to-day; we can scarce soar higher: "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

Now, first, mark, this is the history of the resurrection,—it was *all* chastened joy; joy, but of earth; the Christian's joy, not the world's joy,—joy with the mark of the cross.

1. *Mary*,—who more full of joy than she, that penitent who went weeping after Christ, if she might only have His Body to weep over?—"Tell me where thou hast laid Him." She found Him, risen; He said unto her, "Mary;" but then there was directly, "*Touch Me not.*"

2. *On the sea of Galilee* He walked a stranger in the morning dawn; they knew Him not at first, and when they did, then came a fancied conviction of sin,—“Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”

3. *St. Peter* was restored to his risen Lord, but his joy must be tempered, moderate: “Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?” Peter was grieved because He said a word of his death,—“Another shall carry thee whither thou wouldest not.”

4. Once more they all met at Bethany’s most hallowed village, but He was to leave them there: “He led them out as far as to Bethany, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.”

Yes, all their joy was subdued; the resurrection was more tangibly joyful to them than we can *feel* it, for it spoke to them of one they had lost and now had found. Still it must be marked with sorrow. Sorrow! but they were not sorrowful: they were calm,—calmer than they used to be before His death; there was something so *human*—shall we say *weak*—about their love then, and so permissive in His reception of it: a leaning on His breast, but rebuking Him; it was Christ, the Son of Man, Peter rebuking Him,—“Why may not I follow Thee now?”

"We cannot tell what He saith, A little while." There is something of complaining. But afterwards, after the resurrection, that which had been their turning point, all was changed there; they were calm then, they took sad things well. He spoke of going, and Peter made no complaint; He went up, and they stood gazing. It was Christ, the Son of God, and they were altered men.

Yes, here is the great fact of the resurrection, the joy of the Christian sobered, subdued, and the Christian himself taking joy quietly, with fear, moderately.

Such is Easter,—blessed day! and so may it be to us. May no extravagance mark our joy, no forgetfulness carry us away.

And, before I go further, there is a comfort in this feeling. We all of us leave Lent with regret; it has been a quiet, holy home of retirement, where we have been more with Christ and less with the world, and have had support to our efforts. We feel when it is over that we were really living near Christ; it looks well after we have passed it; we love its stillness, its little of society, its silence, its small diversity, its calm monotony, its meditations, its additional prayers, its sympathy, and then its last week. Yes, it

suiting us, weak sinners, and we feel a dread lest Easter should undo it all, and make us too easy. Still we feel we must rejoice at Easter; we should be merry to the Scripture tune. But Easter joy is chastened joy; it bears the mark of the cross on it,—“Come, see the place where the Lord lay.” So try and keep up a Lent feeling through Easter. Thus:—

1. Let some little act of devotion or charity, put on at Lent, not be put off at Easter. Each Lent gain a step of life; let no Lent leave you quite where it found you. You have come to it often, go on; prayed often, go on.

2. Let the trials you looked out to bear patiently then deepen into you now, and give a gentler tone to all your character.

3. Have no excess in any joy, lest you suffer reaction; be jealous of leaving off one devotion to God.

Christ is all, to win Him worth worlds: “I count all things as dung that I may win Christ.” He is the “*pearl of great price*,” the “*hid treasure*.” Every enjoyment, every touch of the world, every contact with life which puts one step between you and Him, is a real loss. Who would lose one moment with Christ to gain the whole world!

Through Lent, through Easter, through sorrow and joy, in life, and in the hour of death, let this be your one thought and cry, "I count all things but dung that I may win Christ." Easter is no true Easter if it drift you away from Christ; no Christian joy is Easter joy if it sever you from Him.

And now we have spoken of an Easter fact and learnt an Easter lesson, let us see its likeness. It is strange, but so it is, Easter has more joy than Christmas, and yet Christmas was birth without death, and Easter birth after death. Surely the first is the better. Then why Easter more to us than Christmas? The fact is, it is bright *to us*, we are such that birth after death is more than birth. We are dying creatures, and a word of resurrection is more than a word of birth,—we *must* die, Christmas joy is above us, beyond us; angels may understand it, we scarcely can. The riven grave—to feel we shall see again and live again with those we did love,—has more of joy than aught else; death before the joy of the resurrection, sorrow before the calm.

the state of *penitence* has more in it to of *innocence*. There is a sim-
point, a childlikeness, about in-

nocence, we cannot understand. Penitence has more in point, feeling, expression. Mary Magdalene and St. Peter have more about them to attract *us* than the blessed Virgin and St. John; *they* are above us, beyond us. David comes more home to us than Daniel, Jacob than Samuel; all that we may take pleasure in has more of the fall, and more of the cross in it. The first absolution strikes us more than Baptism; the last Communion more than Confirmation. Nay more, we seem to see in holy Scripture itself words which look as if the penitent even had more favour than the innocent; there was more joy over the one sinner who repented than over the ninety-nine just persons; the younger brother who had wasted his living had more than he who had never strayed. Then, too, about those persons who have never lost grace there is a simplicity, a childlikeness, a gentleness, a freedom from excitement, which we do not understand. They do not understand it, they go on unconsciously; but God knows them, and God will bless them. The penitent state has more to do with us, it most suits our case, generally. So those things which speak of it most touch us. The other state is higher; but we have more to do with the fallen state recovered, the joy which has the cross in it.

So everything partakes of this tone : the holiest sweetest joy is that which has a tone of sadness, a tinge of melancholy ; the perfect, pure, unsullied calm wants a charm, wants an interest to us ; still we feel it is the true one, and why cannot we love it most ? The sadder sunset has beauty to us above the sun of noon or morning ; there is something less feeling in the latter.

Music is most sweet which takes a sadder tone, and marks a day or a scene which it seems to say is happier than the present. Church bells are full of sweet sadness. Still we feel all these should speak cheerfully to a pure soul. We half feel the sad part is akin to us, and so it is ; it is the joy of the fallen, it is an Easter gladness ; it is a joy marked with the cross ; it is more of Easter than Christmas ; it is the risen Body with the print of the wounds.

So all lovely scenes produce a feeling of sadness ; they look more to the past than to the future ; they speak more of the dead than the living. It is our way, it is the tune to which our joys are strung.

So passionate characters interest us more than calm ones ; those who have struggled against sin more than those who have had no sin to struggle with. Nay, we often find ourselves inclined to be

most interested in those who have been most guilty, and we feel it wrong ; we hear a voice fleeting past us which says, "To the pure all things are pure," and we sigh for a purer sight, a purer touch. It is marked on us right through : tears become the signs of our highest joy, and sighs often express an inward peace.

The tune to Easter is that to which our harps are strung ; our joy must be sobered ; the other line of things is the higher to God's eye, and when we die, and lose this mortal state, we shall see it ; we do not now, nor can those who have the purer taste feel it or understand it. They are like little children shorn of the charm of simplicity with which they appear to us.

Such are facts of our life, which are like chastened Easter joy. What is its lesson ?

1. In every joy to find a cross. Be uneasy if any pleasure has no mark of your state, and take it joyfully when it has. If those you love have the touch of death on them ; if the scheme you form has the very element of decay in it ; if the plan you are very fond of has a good chance of soon being carried out by some one else than you ; if the home you dwell in has the symptoms of change,—feel glad, don't sigh ; settledness, completeness, perfection, are no sign of your being

right with God ; they want the Easter stamp, the wound on the risen Body, the "touch Me not" to the eager hand. Be glad of these marks. So a lesson of contentment.

2. If your earthly happiness is very great and unsullied, find crosses, give a constant check to yourself, be jealous of yourself, be afraid lest you should take too clinging a hold on the soil of earth ; in love, be a little cold ; in expression, a little reserved ; in touch, chary ; in description, sobered. We cannot trust ourselves. Be sober ; "Let your moderation be known unto all men : the Lord is at hand." Christ has taught us the nature of our joy, who have been with Him after His resurrection. Let abstinence, or discipline, or rule, be somewhat the check to any overmuch delight or ease on earth. So learn a lesson of denial.

3. Take care not to complain of things. Complaint destroys the blessings such a state may bring to your soul. Be satisfied, though much tried : it is a sign God is in your house. Poverty, sickness, disrespect, unkindness in others, bereavement, may seem hard, and you say, Is this the life and rest of the Christian ? It is : it is the joy of Easter, the Christian joy ; the broken sepulchre, but the mark of the blood ; the risen

Body, but the print of the wounds ; Bethany again, but with it the mount of ascension. So say nothing by way of complaint.

4. In spiritual joys look for a cross, do not be overjoyed about them ; let your Easter be quiet ; do not build too much on assurance and peace ; they are God's gifts ; you are all right, though you have not got them ; you may die without them, and yet be quite safe. It is the risen Body, the Easter lesson. The speaking of warning may be grievous in its repetition : " Peter was grieved."

Do not try to realize things ; you may be unable, and still be safe. Some people want proof of things ; they believe, but cannot lay hold ; have faith, but cannot feel they have it ; believe, but cannot touch the thing they believe. Of course they would like to do so, but it may be their discipline not to ; it is a " Touch Me not," though Christ is plainly there, and we could touch Him if He would let us.

Do not fret at not *realizing repentance* ; you may repent without realizing it. Do not aim at consciousness ; you may be all right and not know it, feel it, or grasp it. God *knows* you, and if you are striving in earnest He is satisfied. Peace, joy, assurance, satisfaction.

are gifts from God ; perhaps He will never give them till you have left this scene altogether.

For you as for them, the resurrection will soon be ascension—forty days. The joy of resurrection is of the chastened kind, and we make too much of it here ; it belongs to us. Resurrection will soon be ascension, religion heaven ; the Body which may not be touched, one in whose bosom we may lie : the riven tomb be changed for the glorious throne, the re-union of forty days for the union of eternity.

Such is our Easter, our Easter joy ; it is most blessed, but not perfect ; it is a most blessed forty days, it wants one thing more—"to be for ever with the Lord."

I spoke of two classes there may be among you. Some of you may, God grant, never have lost the innocence of your baptism ; with some, it may have been wrecked and blighted.

Thank God, there is a state of penitence, there is a life of penitence, there is a power of absolution, there is pardon for the most fallen ; if there were not, God knows what would become of many,—of many ! aye most are leading the lives rather of penitence than innocence ; the work of many is to reach heaven through much tribulation.

Happy those who have never lost their first estate ! happy those, when He comes, who have never been blotted from the book of life ! Oh if any of you have never lost your place there ; keep it,—keep it indignantly, keep it jealously, keep it watchfully, self-denyingly. Satan will try hard to ruin you ; will you be overcome by him ? will you let him have you ? will you lose heaven, lose the high place prepared for you from your baptismal hour ? will you lose your place near Christ to all eternity for Satan ? Oh no !

The age of fourteen to eighteen wrecks many ; keep yourself through that time. You know what I mean. *There* are rocks that split many vessels, and they go down never to rise,—impurity, rebellion, pride, lying, independence, vanity, unbelief.

But if some have strayed, if some have given up God, if some have stained their virgin robe, if some can remember a time when they did leave God,—they may yet return, yet be freely, fully pardoned, yet go to heaven.

SERMON XIX.

THE RESURRECTION. PRACTICAL LESSONS FROM IT.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.—COL. iii. 1.

THE season of Lent has passed away, Easter time is fast passing too, and we are going on into another ecclesiastical portion of the year. We tried to catch the lessons of Lent as it went by,—they were those of penitence. It is now gone; another Lent has gone, our witness at the judgment. How differently spent by different persons! by some its solemn warnings neglected, its opportunities despised, the very week of the Passion spent without one thought of *His* sufferings whose week it was, the very day of the Cross spent without one penitential tear, or one painful thought of sin. Those who have so spent it must abide the judgment, and they must answer for it *there*.

Some, again, have perhaps thought little of it,

though not despised it. Some have used it well ; have nailed their sins to the cross of Christ, have stood by the cross and watched. On all such, we do not doubt, some healing has fallen, some gleam of hope has flashed across them, the clouds that gathered round the world of glory have parted, and through them a glimpse of things unseen, a ray of the nightless morning, has shone, some yearning of the soul been satisfied, the foretaste of eternal bliss. They were sinners ; but if they have *thus* been at the cross, a healing virtue has gone out from His garment and healed them ; a voice from the darkness has promised them paradise ; a keen pang has finished their redemption and purchased their rest.

Thus have the faithful crucified sin and self, and thus have they been rewarded.

And now, as we have died with Him, we are called upon to rise with Him ; as we have crucified sin, we are called upon to rise unto righteousness ; as we have been in sorrow, we are told to be in joy and gladness, feeling that we are pardoned, that we may go on our way rejoicing, that we must rise to holiness and goodness, as we have had the load of sin removed and our pardon sealed. Surely no motive can so lead us on to obey and serve Christ as gratitude for what He has done for us ; therefore now at

Easter we are bid to shew our gratitude by an especial rising to righteousness, that we may be with Christ in all things; wholly His in suffering, in humiliation, in contempt, in crucifixion, in triumph, in holiness, in eternal glory. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."

Then Easter is a blessed time, and should be the glory of the Church's year.

The world would abuse it all; they would have joy, but no sorrow; heaven, but no repentance; pardon, but no holiness; merriment, but no calmness; the resurrection, but not the cross; life without death; they would pass to glory without a sigh; belong to Christ in what they please, and seek Him *first* in the last dark dreadful hour, in which we *know* but of *one human* being who sought and *found*, and even he was crucified with Christ; even he found no pardon without suffering with Christ, without shame for His sake; even he rose not with Christ in paradise without dying with Him on the cross. Short as his risen life was, it *was* a risen one, and a suffering one. It was but from the third hour to the sixth, yet it was spent with Christ; he landed not in heaven without passing over a troubled sea; he saw not yonder world of glory

without the life of sorrow here; baptized in blood, crucified in sin, penitent through suffering, assured by the very voice of Jesus, and when he was dead, still living, as it were, to partake of His Body and Blood who hung by his side, he passed to his joyful resurrection. So we must rise with Christ.

We have examined the history and symbolical force of Christ's death and resurrection. I purpose now dwelling on the Christian's being *a risen life*.

1. The apostles were crucified with Christ, and rose with Him; i. e. they gave up their sins by suffering, and rose to a new and better life. *Their* whole life was a crucifixion; from the first they forsook domestic ties, earthly honours, prospects of success, old prejudices, long-confirmed habits, for Jesus. This began their crucifixion. But at the cross, by more intense suffering, by deeper contempt, by humbling falls, by sad inconsistencies, they were led to hate sin more still, to give it up more firmly; they crucified sin and self, and began the life of the resurrection, that of greater holiness, firmer principle, deeper devotion.

a. Take *St. Peter*. He forsook all for Christ; yet sin was not mortified, nor he risen, as he was

afterwards, to holiness ; he denied Him openly, and swore when he denied Him ; but he was crucified by suffering, by anguish, by shame and scoffing, and he rose to holiness. After the resurrection he was at the tomb ; with deep earnestness he repeated his love for Christ ; his love was still warm, though more sure ; his obedience more on principle, not on feeling only ; his energy still vigorous, but more calm ; he had risen to holiness, and so he went on. In the Acts how different a character was St. Peter to St. Peter in St. Matthew's Gospel ! In his Epistle he was the same, so calm, so unexcited, so sure, so settled ; he preached boldly, he suffered patiently, he laboured hard, he healed the sick, he raised the dead ; but there was no ambition, no self-conceit, it was all in the name of Jesus of Nazareth. He died crucified for Christ. And all this was his new life, his risen life, his following Christ in the regeneration. And so with all.

β. *St. Matthew* for eight years preached Christ to the Jews, and then, among the wilds of Ethiopia, far from his receipt of custom or his life of honour, he preached in solitude and died unknown.

γ. *St. Thomas* preached for years in India,

and having established the Church there, was cruelly killed.

δ. *St. Andrew* laboured among the cities of idolatrous Greece, and he, too, died upon the cross for Christ.

ε. *St. Bartholomew* lived for Christ, and was crucified for Him at last.

All gave up the pleasures, the honours, the comforts of life; all rose again to holiness for Christ's sake; all lived a holier, more devoted life after the resurrection than they did before; it was their first resurrection-day, and, risen with Christ, they lived a risen life. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."

Such are the thoughts I would lead you to now, the history of Christ and His apostles after the resurrection, teaching us the duty of the risen life; and on this account, in this season the Gospels till Whitsuntide, except those which speak of the resurrection itself, all contain the promise of the Holy Spirit, as the means of our living the new life.

In the early days of the Church this season was thought one of so much joy that Christians never knelt, but always prayed *standing*, to shew their spiritual freedom.

Now we will see how we are to practise this doctrine.

2. Mark St. Paul's expression, "since ye *were* raised with Christ." It is by no strength of our own that we are to be raised to Christ, but by the strength of God in us. We are already raised with Christ, and are now called on particularly to think of it. We were raised to the new birth, or life, when we were baptized: as Scripture says, "We are buried with Him by Baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life." *Then* the being risen with Christ began; *then* the power of His Holy Spirit was put into us, by which we might rise to a holy life, and without which we *could* not; *then* we were made partakers of His might who took on Him our weakness; *then* we partook His glory who stooped to take our shame; *then* all His was made ours, and ours His, we were given to Him, and henceforth walk with Him; *then* gave He us power to become the sons of God. This is an important, essential doctrine; He *gives* us *power* to become sons of God. We are not sons of God by nature nor by birth; we are not sons of God by virtue of our good disposition, or our advantageous circumstances; we

are not sons of God by our amiability or our honesty, by our general kindness or natural generosity of disposition; we are simply children of God by virtue of our Baptism and the Spirit of God within us, working in us all manner of holiness, and raising us with Christ to the holiness of God. The Holy Spirit of God is the elevating power, raising us from the tomb of sin unto the risen life of God; it is the cleansing power signified by the waters of Baptism, cleansing us from the filth of the flesh, and raising us to all purity of heart and life; it is the sanctifying power, making all our affections holy, and pure, and good; without it the best *must* be lost, with it the worst *may* be saved. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

Such is the power by which we rise to God.

3. One result, then, of our risen life, is the doing all things to God's glory, which before we did without this view; to do old things in a *new way*. For this it was that Christ passed through life, that He might shew us how to do everything to God's glory; that everything, even

the most trivial, should be done to His glory : *He hungered*, that we might hunger patiently, and not provide food by any unlawful means, but according to the word proceeding out of the mouth of God. He took food, and when He took it thanked God, that we might do the same, and “eat and drink to the glory of God.” He slept, that we might repose in God, that we might be calm and quiet in the midst of danger, resting on God, while our vessel bears us, tossing to and fro, o’er the troubled sea of life. He wept, that we might weep, as He did, at the sorrows of others, shewing that there was nothing unmanly in sympathy and sorrow for another ; the tears He shed were human, and the love that wrung them out was divine. He sorrowed, that we might learn resignation under sorrow ; He was subject to Mary, that we might learn obedience ; He worked with His hands, —“Is not this the carpenter’s son ?”—that we might learn never to be ashamed of the *poorest, hardest* lot to which God may call us. So in everything He has shewed us how to rise with Him, how to alter old things, bringing religion down to the most common matters of life ; that we may learn to call nothing *common* which He has sanctified, and to do nothing without

an eye to the glory of God, since He has blest all things; "old things are passed away, all things are become new;" and since He has done this, how sinful it becomes to use inconsiderately or unholily one of the commonest things of life which He has consecrated.

This is one part of our resurrection with Christ, doing common things in a religious manner, doing old things in a new way.

4. Again, we rise with Him by suffering with Him still; we look at trials in a new way, not as the world; we look at them as blessings, raising us to God. What the world call loss, we call gain; what they count bereavement, we count a gift; what they sorrow at, we joy at; they seek for prosperity, happiness, honour, greatness, well-doing, and call them gain; we call them all trials, dangerous things; what they call disgrace, adversity, unhappiness, are God's precious gifts, weaning us from the world, and raising us to Christ, to where He "sitteth on the right hand of God." What men count loss, is a gift of our risen Saviour, wrought by Jesus Christ, as risen, and so pouring down His gifts. And so, if He undo one by one the links which bind us to life, we shall, if we are sincere, see them patiently unclasped, see the chain get less

and less every year ; the object of our affections, our strength, our health,—we shall give them up at His call, counting our richest gain but loss, and our loss gain, for Christ's sake.

And more than this ; we would unclasp the chain ourselves, and give up now what *He* does not take from us, if it be a hindrance in the least degree to us : if our honours are a snare to us, avoid them when we may ; if reputation, make ourselves lowly and think upon our sins ; if lawful pleasures, take little of them ; if lifted up with what we have, make ourselves poorer ; if beset with love of gain, part with treasure here and find it in heaven ; if the satisfying our appetites becomes a snare, let us fast ; if indolence, let us do hard works of religious kindness for Christ's sake ; so let ourselves rend the links which God's hand breaks not yet ; because if we break them not they will grow too close by-and-bye, and they must be broken by force then ; when it will be more painful. So we will begin now to give up whatever we think may prevent our rising to Christ, either now or by-and-bye.

So in old days the Christians at Easter-time gave much away in alms, to shew that they lived for new things now, and cared not to part with pleasures in order that they might live with God

then, and for Him now. *Lazarus is at the door*, and shall we live within, and have more than enough? Christ is on earth,—you may find Him in affliction, by the side of the fatherless and widow, on the cold hearth of bereavement; you may find Him one of the family of poverty, one of the mourners at every grave, one of the multitude of sick sufferers. Go and clothe Him in His poor; feed, comfort, bless His poor, and you bless Him. Oh, haste, for He is at the door, He knocks. He will ask you how you have blest the afflicted for Him, how you have aided Him in His sufferers. Guard those hallowed members of His Church, those temples of His Holy Spirit, the baptized children of those who cannot tell them the way to God; and bless them, and you shall receive from Him a hundred-fold for what you do now for them.

So by suffering and denial live anew to Christ.

5. And by holy acts, by more frequent prayer, making it your delight, your frequent occupation, not an irksome duty to satisfy conscience, but a blessed privilege giving peace; going nowhere where you are unfitted for prayer, entering into no society which will make you unfit for it; taking no pleasure which would make prayer

unpleasing or unsuitable — giving up the pleasure, not the prayer.

Let your attendance at His holy altar, too, be more frequent, more aided by prayer and thought, not allowing the cares of life or its common occupations to prevent your receiving, ever living in preparation for the grave, considering death as the great end of life, and the judgment the great reason why you were placed here at all.

And again, rise with Christ in all holy feelings and dispositions, mortifying pride by living lowly, forgiving injuries which are still real injuries, bearing slights, and never resenting them, living as Christ lived, and acting towards all men as He did, ever acting as you will wish to say you acted when you are judged, ever looking to that time, and how you will feel then. Because it comes soon; and we have, most of us, at all events, spent half our lives on earth; half the time, perhaps more, we have given us to prepare in is gone; and when we remember that those few fleeting years are *all* we have to secure heaven and avoid hell, should we not be diligent? And we shall be if we are living the risen life.

1. *If we love no sin*, but really hate all sin;

so that whenever we commit it, it is of infirmity, and against our general will, and a cause of deep regret to us and determination to do better.

2. When good actions become our habits; although many young Christians have a warm, fervent zeal, yet when temptation comes they often fall away, not having as yet their principles settled and fixed; not having grown in grace and made goodness a second nature.

3. If when we do fall into sin our regrets for it each time are more and more deep, and our efforts more and more strong than ever to keep out of the way of it.

4. If our passions and feelings are mortified and quiet, and are all brought to help out our religion and devotedness.

5. If you bear a sharp reproof better than you do a secret flattery; when reproofed, if you suffer it without excusing yourself, make not secret murmuring against it, regret the scandal and willingly confess the fault.

6. If you excuse no sin because it is little, but looking on all sin as disobedience.

7. If you seek to do good simply for the sake of serving and pleasing God.

8. If you are *always* well inclined to religion and religious duties, not only *at times*.

9. Doing all things that God bids you, and making no exceptions.

If you are all this, you are living as risen with Christ.

Such, then, should we ever be. In Lent, especially to think of dying to sin; in Easter, of living to righteousness; in Lent, of mortifying vice; in Easter, of rising to holiness, seeing that then we especially live a holy and godly life; and not deceiving ourselves or others by speaking of religion when we do not live up to it; speaking of being saved by Christ, when we do not rise with Him from our sins to the holiness which He commands.

See to these things. Depend on it many men are forming a wrong estimate of their own character; they are not living as they should; they do not see the need of holiness as they should; they are self-satisfied, and try to satisfy others; and they get over the difficulty raised by more spiritual characters by counting their religion enthusiasm, or finding faults and inconsistencies in their character. But think what they may, there must be a very different life to what most men are living, before they are fit for the kingdom of heaven.

SERMON XX.

THE DOCTRINES OF THE ASCENSION.

1. ITS FACTS; 2. THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT; 3. THE INTER-
CESSION; 4. THE ASCENDED LIFE; 5. THE ASCENDED BODY.
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And He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.
—ST. LUKE xxiv. 50—53.

THE history of Jesus on earth is a gradual shewing forth of greater and greater mysteries; that is, He did not shew Himself *at once*; there was a gradual development. To His own people He became gradually more great, more mysterious, more wonderful, yet more endeared; i. e. the light of His Godhead, shrouded in the human being, gradually broke out, as the eyes of His people could bear it, and dawned on till it shone forth before them in all the fulness of divine display. To His people, His glories became gradually greater; to His enemies, His

life became daily an object of contempt and derision.

His birth at Bethlehem was obscure, and in the Infant heralded by angels the shepherds saw but the child of Mary, the wife of Joseph the carpenter. There may have been a mystery about their feelings concerning Him, connected with the message of the angels ; but in the Child there was nothing save the infant that lay before them. So it was at the Purification, and so it was when He talked in the temple ; although He shewed no common learning, yet He was but a Jewish Child ; His mother wondered at Him, and pondered on Him. So time went on ; He appears in the wilderness, and fasted forty days : no one knew this, save the angels who blessed Him. Then He came, seemingly a destitute stranger, the friend of the preacher of the desert, John the Baptist ; and when Andrew and Peter followed Him, it was not for any thing wonderful in what He did, or said, or looked, but for the word of prophecy they heard concerning Him. So it was until His first miracle ; now they wondered more, it was more strange, the beams of His Godhead by degrees broke forth, and Jesus Christ became more manifestly the Son of God. Then came the walking on the water, and

the storm on the sea, and they were more astonished still, and marvelled greatly. Then came the strange scenes of His death, His last discourses, His institution of the Sacrament; all these things were known but to His own people; the world knew them not; they watched Him in silent wonder, and felt that He was more than man; but as yet there had been nothing strange about His Body,—that was as it was; it was His words and deeds which struck them, till He rose again. Then His Body was changed; Mary might not touch Him; He passed through the closed doors; the two disciples did not know Him, nor those at Gennesaret. The divine nature had now far more fully burst forth, and He ascended, in the sight of all, to God the Father. His resurrection was in secret, but now the work was done, and He manifested forth His glory. He took to Himself His glorious conquering power, He ascended up on high, the full splendour of His divinity broke forth through the veil of the Body, and leading captivity captive, He passed into glory.

Such was the gradual development of the character of Jesus from His birth to His ascension. We may therefore consider the ascension of Jesus Christ as the full accomplishment

of the Christian's hopes and life, as it was the full accomplishment of Christian life and character.

I will examine the fact of the ascension, and the doctrines of it, in connection with these facts, viz., the perfection of Christian character, and the completion of our hopes at and by the ascension.

1. "He led them out as far as to Bethany." Before the crucifixion the Human nature of Jesus being the more conspicuous and manifest, He occasionally let forth the beams of His divine glory as from behind a curtain: to assert His being God *as well as man*, He walked on the sea, He "was transfigured before them;" the voice spoke to Him from heaven. After the resurrection, His divine nature appearing more fully, and seeming well-nigh, to weak minds, to eclipse by its dazzling lustre His human nature, His object was to assert and shew forth His humanity,—that He *was man*: He ate and drank to shew He was hungry, as a man; He walked and talked with them; He suffered St. Thomas to touch His Body, though He suffered not Mary,—the one having the weaker faith, and needing it more; and now, in His last glorious act, His ascension, when His human nature

might be wholly eclipsed, He asserted it by leading them out as far as to Bethany, the village hallowed by His most human words, where He had loved a human friend and shed a human tear; Bethany, where He had sighed over a human death, and displayed the deep affections of a man; Bethany, where once He had so allowed them to draw out His sympathies that they felt He was indeed a man, subject to like feelings and sorrows with themselves, where He had drawn the love of a God "with the cords of a man;" Bethany, where "He loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." This was the spot from which He chose to ascend to heaven; He chose Bethany as the last scene of His earthly pilgrimage to consecrate the memory of His holy intercourse there, that His people, when He was gone, might go out to Bethany from the turmoil of the multitude, and the tumult of life, look back on the Friend—so true a Friend—who had passed up on high, and while they remembered His human friendship, might connect with it His ascension too, thus realizing the perfect nature of God and man in one spot; their consolation in the hours of their remaining pilgrimage. For this He lingered in His last hours amid the shades of Bethany, that His last scene might

hallow the very name of *affection*, and stamp it with the high and holy character of His own sanction.

How beautifully does this act connect His divine and human nature in our minds. We want a friendship which can stoop down to a distinct alliance with poverty, depression, and sorrow; we want the absence of numbers, the repose of solitude, the tranquillity of home; we want the tenderness upon which the multitude has no claim, the hidden asylum where heart can sympathize with heart, where infirmity can find pity and calamity respect. Such are the lessons of Bethany, the scene of His human affections, His last human sorrows, His full display of His divine power: then His ascension completed the display of the divine and human nature.

2. "And He lifted up His hands and blessed them." His last act was a blessing. When He first came, the song had been tuned in heaven,—"On earth peace, good-will towards men." Through years of labour He had blessed them by His active kindness, and now He was about to leave them He led them out *to bless them*. His work of salvation was accomplished, and His last act was a blessing: it was not instruc-

tion ; that was done ; the book of His instruction was closed and sealed. It was not reproof ; He had done all that was needed there : it was not warning ; He spoke to His friends and others who loved Him,—warning was not needed : it was a blessing ; a word which might settle on them as the dove, and be an actual comfort and support to them throughout the days of their pilgrimage. All other works were over, and the object of all the rest He performed upon them,—His blessing. He came to bless mankind, and His last earthly act was to remind His people of the object for which He came. So by blessing them He displayed the perfection of His redeeming power, the perfection of His divine and human nature united,—by standing among them, and lifting up His hands on them, as man, and by the pronouncing a blessing on them as God. “Neither prayed He for them alone, but for those also who shall believe on Him through their word.” He blessed *them* to shew that He could bless us. Was it not that in after ages the sufferer might turn to Him as the stronghold ; that the disciple in this life of toil, at the stake and at the block ; that martyrs in every age, sufferers for His dear sake in every land ; that we, amid all our contempts and trials for Jesus’

sake, might remember His still uplifted hands, and hear His still affectionate blessing,—our peace in sorrow, and our strength in weakness?

“Poor though I am, despised, forgot,
Yet God, my God, forgets me not :
And he is safe, and must succeed,
Jesus ! for whom Thy voice will plead.”

The parting blessing was the type and symbol of His intercession, beginning from the hour of the ascension, and continuing till the morning of the judgment.

3. “And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.” The term of His earthly ministry was over, and He was parted from them ; the gradual process of His shewing forth His nature was completed now, and they, having had enough to feel and know Him as God, must live awhile without Him, or they could not live with Him for ever.

And this brings us to consider, secondly, the benefits of which we are partakers by the ascension ; or the necessity there was, for our sakes, that He should ascend to heaven.

The first great benefit we receive from the ascension is the gift of the Holy Spirit. This gift evidently hung closely on the ascension.

“It is expedient for you that I go away ; for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart I will send Him unto you.” Again : “ I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever.” Again : “ He that believeth on Me, the works that I do he shall do also ; and greater works than these shall he do, *because* I go to the Father.” Again : “ Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended to My Father.”

The proud reasoner might say, Why could He not pray the Father, without going to Him ? why must He depart to send the Spirit ? But we who live by faith dare not ask why,—so it is, so we are told ; it is a deep and awful mystery ; we can but muse on God’s ways, and take them because they are God’s ways.

So then it was ; the gift of the Holy Spirit depended on the ascension of Christ. Thus all the workings and influences of the Holy Spirit depended on the ascension.

1. The Holy Spirit speaking through the means of conscience, and guiding us into the path of duty, is the effect of the ascension.

2. The Holy Spirit sanctifying our unclean hearts, suggesting holy thoughts, when we should

by nature think nothing but what is unclean or sinful, is the effect of the ascension.

3. The Holy Spirit comforting us in sorrow, raising our depraved hearts to God, and in the hour of temptation and distress revealing to our minds the glories of a future and unseen world, is the effect of the ascension.

4. The Holy Spirit acting through means of grace,—the Word, the Sacraments, the public service and the private prayer,—is the object of the ascension.

5. The Holy Spirit dwelling in us, giving us strength, raising our hearts, comforting our sorrows; in all His most blessed works among the children of men, His presence and His power among us, is the effect of the ascension.

Such are some of the direct blessings of the ascension, and the doctrines attached to it. And this again teaches us another lesson, though indirectly.

The disciples, in sorrow, may have wondered how the departure of Christ could possibly have worked good for them; but it did. And so it often is on earth: the good are taken away when they are doing most benefit to others. The best loved, the most useful, the most respected, are often carried early to the grave; and we wonder

why. We know not, save that "*it is expedient*;" that some good will follow we doubt not, as there did from His departure, "the chief among ten thousand," Jesus Christ, God blessed for ever. But as they did not at first feel and see the benefit, so do not we; but we weep over the grave of a departed saint, or regret the absence of one who was doing us good. The disciples did find the benefit, and so shall we. St. Stephen died, that martyr young and bold, for Jesus' sake, when men thought he would bless and defend the infant Church, and they wondered, doubtless. But was there no good in his removal? was it not the means of converting St. Paul, and through him the Gentile world? Was it not St. Stephen's prayer which convicted the heart of St. Paul? *There was the benefit.*

Here we must lose to gain, suffer to rejoice, die to live; we must separate to meet Jesus, part on earth to meet in heaven. Yea, we must *rejoice* in tribulation also, since "through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom of heaven."

But again, secondly, the ascension of Christ bought for us the most complete triumph over our enemies. Five hundred brethren stood to see

Him go, in the light of day, into heaven. It was not done in a corner; and when in after years the disciples were persecuted from city to city, dragged before kings and rulers, insulted, injured, and oppressed; when the infidel smiled at them in scorn, and the heathen ridiculed a religion that purchased for them no voluptuous ease, and a death of torture and distress; then they had the triumphant answer from five hundred witnesses, that He whom they served, and for whom they died, had passed into heaven, and had conquered all the arts of His enemies, and the mighty efforts of Satan. So was it their triumphant answer, and so it is now for us when enemies oppose us; when we are small and of no reputation, when we are poor and despised for the sake of religion, when we are sore tempted, and tried by heavy and severe chastisement, then it is our triumphant support to remember that our Master has gone up to heaven, having triumphed over the very sufferings beneath which we bend, and will come again to raise us all out of our different trials in which we suffer with Him, and take us with Him into the perfect glory of heaven.

Again, thirdly, the ascension of Jesus Christ forces on us the duty of ascending with Him in

spirit and in heart to God, to live above the world, to raise our affections to things above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

It is our duty, as well as our privilege, to lift our hearts and affections above scenes and events which must so soon pass away. Is it not wonderful to see Christian men possessed of such privileges, the subjects of such promises, supported by such hopes, engrossed and taken up in the poor and petty disputes of sinners, living merely for pleasure or earthly profit, mixing up in quarrels and dissensions with persons who do not fear God, thereby injuring their power of doing good, and preventing the wholesome and peaceful effort of a consistent example. We should rise above the world in our affections and interests, we should ascend with our ascended Saviour. Imagine the freedom of the Christian's spirit, allowed and able to be free in the midst of countless sorrows ; and under trials however severe, to soar in soul to the world where Jesus lives, to lean on His arm, and be sheltered by His love !

Thus from the ascension we learn to live an ascended and risen life with God.

But again, fourthly, from the ascension of Christ began and proceeds the benefit of His

continual intercession ; His intercession procuring for us the continual pardon of sin, the continual grace of the Spirit, the continual sparing of our life, the continual remembrance of our bodily infirmities at the throne of God ; this work is begun and procured by the ascension of Christ, to our great and endless comfort.

Again, fifthly, the ascending into heaven became the opportunity of the promise of His return to take His own to heaven :—" I go to prepare a place for you ;" " I will come again to receive you to Myself ;" " in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven shall He so come again." He has gone up, and will return to take His own people to Himself, and terribly to avenge Himself upon His enemies. Glorious and blessed promise to the servant of God, that then his trials will be over, he will need them no more, and the great body of Christ's Church will stand assembled to meet His return,—apostles and prophets, Jews and Gentiles, risen from the grave to welcome Him, and passing into heaven to live with Him. And that day must be terrible to the enemies of His Gospel, when their whole time of pleasurable sin will be at an end, when the truth of the religion they despised will burst upon their mind, and they

stand trembling rebels before the King they would not have to reign over them.

Again, sixthly, connected with the doctrine of the ascension is the fact of the resurrection and ascension of the human body; that we shall, like Christ, having died with Him to sin, having risen with Him to righteousness, ascend with and like Him, in our actual body, glorified and incorruptible. Connected with this is the privilege of knowing again in heaven those whom we knew on earth, and recognising in the courts of the palace of the redeemed the very friends and relatives we held communion with on earth.

Such is the doctrine of the ascension of Jesus Christ, and the lessons we are to learn from it. We are too much inclined to pass by these holy-days without considering practically the lessons we must learn from them. If each festive day brought and left its own peculiar teaching to our heart; if Christmas found and left us rejoicing in a Saviour born; and Lent left us contrite penitents; and Good-Friday calm, yet chastened and accepted children; and Easter left us yearning after the risen life of righteousness; and Ascension left us relying on the promise and intercession of Christ; and Whitsuntide left us

seeking earnestly the Holy Spirit of God ; and Trinity left us believing fully, and deeply, practically valuing the existence and works of each Person in the ever-blessed Trinity,—how blessed would each revolving year become to us, how would each departing friend place us nearer to the bosom of God. We are too cold-hearted, we do not humbly seek and humbly receive the gifts of a freely-giving God. We are fond of ourselves ; we love to form a character and keep it up, to support an argument and defend it ; we are disappointed when we fail, because we have spoiled our reputation in another's mind ; we pray, and read, and think, and speak, simply and only “that we may consume them on our lusts ;” we do not live to God's glory, and act to become better Christians, unknown save by our example to the world, and only standing before God as our Judge, who knoweth the secrets of the heart.

If we did live more to God, we should value and love the silent seasons of holy-days, as they pass quietly by, unknown, unvalued by the world ; we should let each one serve to wean us further from the world, and fix our treasure in heaven ; and though the work would be none of

ostentation or display, though we should gain little credit of men, we should know and be known of God more and more, by making each Sunday and festival an altar of praise, each holy-day a shrine of prayer.

SERMON XXI.

THE INTERCESSION OF CHRIST.

So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.—MARK xvi. 19.

I. THERE are four powers displayed in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. We do not know in how many points of view He is known and displayed in heaven, where He sits with the Father; we know not in how many thousand characters of love and wisdom, light and glory, He may appear to the redeemed in bliss: to us He appears in four distinct characters,—distinct, yet one; different in operation, yet one in effect and one in nature, the one leading to the other:—His creative power, His sympathizing power, His redeeming power, and His intercessional power. There we know Him as our Creator, our Redeemer, our sympathizing Friend, and our continual Intercessor. In each one of these respects He is our comfort and support, and closely connected with us for our salvation.

1. He was first *our Creator*. He was with God from everlasting; He was with the Father before the worlds were made; "all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." "God created all things by Jesus Christ;" "By Him were all things created that are in heaven and in earth: all things were created by Him and for Him;" "Of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things, to whom be glory for ever." Then He was the Creator of the world, with God from everlasting; before the mountains and hills were brought forth, before the vast universe had one world to roll through its boundless space, Jesus Christ was God, and with the Father, perfect God, planning all things with the Father, forming the worlds with Him, and appointing everything in its own proper place and sphere. So the Lord Jesus Christ is our Creator.

2. He is *our sympathizing Friend*. Having made all things, having formed the worlds, and set them in their own place, and appointed each its own sphere, He looked at the work He had done, "and behold it was very good." He saw the earth, and man formed upon it; and behold *man fell, and Jesus Christ beheld him fall*. If we take our stand on some lofty hill beneath

a sunny morning, and cast our eyes over the beautiful expanse of nature,—hills clad with verdure, and exposing their bare brows to the sun of heaven; villages radiant with the richest colours; the waters in many a silver stream winding among them, all clear, and bright, and still, beneath a cloudless sky,—we should see little in such a scene which was sad; we should feel it, and only feel it, to be as “earth with all her thousand voices praising God.” But what should we *not* see? We should not see here and there, on every half-mile amid the mighty scene, the sorrows and the woes of *man*; our eye would pass over unnoticed the thousand chambers where worn-out sickness languishes in keen suffering amid a scene so beautiful; we should not see the funeral train, winding in sad procession to the village church, which rose beautiful to our eyes amid the sunny trees; we should not see the widow weeping over her dying child, or the orphan carrying its parent to the earth; we should not see innocent children whose hearts were breaking by the pale form which had breathed its last; we should not see the peace of families marred by disputes and quarrels, the quiet of domestic life disturbed by the cry of rage and jealousy, nor the ruined hopes of the

parent whose child's honour or character has been stolen by the seducer and the profligate. Such scenes we see nought of; our eye misses them, or catches but the roof of the home of sorrow, adding to the beauty of the general scene. We hear but the sweet sounds of summer, we hear not the jar of discord and passion, the shout of the drunkard, nor the cry of the agonized family. We hear the sweet, sad melody of the tolling bell, but we recognise not in it the messages of death which echo in dull monotony on the aching ear of bereavement.

Such we see in nature to admire, such we do *not* see to sympathize with. It was different with Jesus Christ: He stood on the everlasting hills in the bright morning of creation, and the earth was beautiful; He looked a little longer, and His eye pierced where ours cannot, and amid the deep valleys of seeming repose, and the dark recesses of the hills, He saw the scenes of human suffering, and His ear caught the note of human sorrow. Sunny streams wound amid new and varied distress; sin marred all its beauty, and the loveliness of nature seemed to Him but the shroud of sufferings. He saw more than we: He saw the body die, and He saw the spirit go, and He knew whither it went. He saw not as

man seeth : when He saw He pitied, and when He pitied He came to save. He took on Him the form of man, and Jesus Christ the Creator became the sympathizing Friend.

And this is His second character,—*His power of sympathy*. He displayed it when He lay an infant in the bosom of Mary, and slumbered in the village manger ; He displayed it in all His wanderings, by night and by day, in the desert and by the sea-shore ; the streets of Jerusalem and the wilderness of Jordan ; the shores of Galilee and the road of Samaria bore the impress of His blessed feet, and owned and felt a sympathizing God ; God suffering with man, having taken our nature upon Him. The tears He dropt at the sepulchre of Lazarus, and those He wept over the fallen city, proclaimed Him a sympathizing Friend ; the bier of the widow's son, and the chamber of the ruler's daughter ; many a couch of sickness, many a lingering patient, many a possessed demoniac ; the multitudes at Bethsaida, the children climbing on His knee,—all proclaimed and felt Him a sympathizing Friend and a pitying God ; and the Creator became our Benefactor in sympathy.

3. Having felt *for* us, He suffered *with* us, and so became our Redeemer, or displayed His

redeeming power. Trace Him through the last holy week,—the agony in dark Gethsemane, the silent parting in the upper chamber, and the last discourse upon the slopes of Olivet, the scoffing in the judgment-hall, the weary, heavy cross, the toilsome hill of Calvary, the crucifixion, the cry of agony, the stream of Blood, the “giving up the Ghost,” the evening sepulchre, the solitude of the garden where He was buried,—all these declare Him our Redeemer. By those drops of blood and bitter pangs He did redeem us; “by His agony and bloody sweat, by His cross and passion, by His precious death and burial,” He did deliver us.

So He was our Redeemer, He displayed His redeeming power.

4. And having felt for us and felt with us, the Creator, even Jesus Christ, passed into heaven; and well prepared by the past, displayed, and still displays, His present power towards us, His intercessional power, since there “He ever liveth to make intercession for us.” So “after He had spoken unto them He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.”

Thus He displays four powers for us; He is to be viewed by us in four different lights: He is the Author to us of comfort, as our Creator,

Friend, and continual Intercessor, and so will continue to be till time shall be no longer. Oh the fulness of the love of Christ! "Oh the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"

Holy Thursday is appointed by the Church to be kept holy as the day of His Ascension. And as from that day His first and last power began to be displayed in our behalf—His Intercession,—we will, with God's blessing and permission, examine the doctrine. His redemption is now complete, and He has purchased the entire, full, and free forgiveness of every soul in the whole world, by the power of His death on the cross, if only they will turn to Him and be saved.

II. *a.* There is then, now, *one human Body* in heaven, and *but one*. It stands there surrounded by countless thousands of angels; but it alone is a body: and it has had wounds, but they have ceased to bleed; its voice falls in human accents on the Father's ear; it is like us, as far as being a body and *having suffered*; it has been there since Ascension-day, and will stay there till the judgment.

β. And more, *it is in heaven*; it went up there. Men would tell us heaven is nowhere; it is but

a state, anywhere ; that God is everywhere, and nowhere particularly ; and the spirit, when the body dies, will be everywhere. But Scripture tells us that Jesus *went up*, and that He went up with His Body, and a body must be somewhere in particular. Whether Christ went up far beyond the sun, or beyond the stars, we do not know ; but that He went up somewhere, and is somewhere, we do know ; and since the Bible has told us so, it is wrong to speak of it otherwise.

γ. What does He do there ? He stands at God's right hand, interceding for us.

Now how do we need this interceding power ? where is our want of it ? and where is its difference from the work accomplished for us on the cross ? How does His interceding power differ from His redeeming power ? On the cross our Lord Jesus Christ purchased the redemption of the whole world. On the occasion of the fall, when Adam first hid himself from God, the sentence of death had past on the human race,—death in time, and death, or punishment, in eternity. Under this awful sentence Abel fell a victim, though a holy man ; Noah and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, yielded up the ghost in their due time. Moses saw not the land of promise ; David and the

prophets slept with the dead. So had the sentence of death continual power, even over the good; and the same sentence will have effect till the last human being born into the world has uttered his last cry of distress, and his spirit passed away to God who gave it. But the other part of the sentence, the sentence of eternal death, received an alteration. It could not be removed without the full execution of the sentence on some one, and the one Victim offering Himself to receive the sentence was the Lord Jesus Christ; He broke the night of ages, and shed light and hope on souls otherwise doomed to darkness and despair. And by bearing death for us He did not take away the sentence of death, but He bore the sentence for us,—bore the punishment sin had deserved, and thereby took off the sentence from those who would believe on His Name. From that moment the sins of those who had loved Him in prospect, who did love Him at present, and should love Him in future, were forgiven freely and fully, and the gate of heaven opened wide for every returning sinner. Such was the result and work of the redemption, the work finished on the cross,—the pardon of every penitent sinner in the whole world, whoever and wherever he might

be,—his full, undeserved, and unlimited pardon, *on condition of his repentance,*

Such is the work of the Cross. And what is the need of His intercession? Much. Though pardon has been gained for the penitent and faithful on Christ's part, there needs the constant work of penitence and faithfulness on our part; there needs the keeping up of His work, and the pardon of the sins of each day we spend; i. e. *by the redemption on the Cross*, the privilege of pardon was gained for every creature, and the intercession is the constant *application* of that pardon to our particular cases. On the Cross the pardon was purchased, and at the right hand of the Father the pardon is given and applied; on the Cross the pardon is proclaimed generally, and at the right hand of the Father it is applied individually to each condemned sinner who accepts the conditions; on the Cross the power of admission for the whole world to heaven was purchased, at the right hand of God the sign or seal of admission is given to each individual to use; on the Cross the Sovereign has been satisfied, and the throne and the subject reunited; on the Cross heaven was opened, and at the right hand of the Father the individuals admitted into the kingdom. The work of intercession is

the continual and effectual application of the work of the redemption.

Were we penitent yesterday for the sins of yesterday, praying God, through Christ, for pardon? We have sinned again to-day, and we must procure a pardon through Christ again to-day. We have sinned, and are expected to confess our sins daily to God; and while we confess, to repent of them; and on repentance we receive a pardon through Jesus. The Son of God stands continually at the right hand of God, begging for our pardon, praying for the application of the forgiveness He purchased on the Cross to our particular case; and we know that the Father hears always and answers His prayer: "Whatsoever ye ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you." We must never think a committed sin does not need a distinct pardon; we are never so good as to be able to commit one wilful sin and not to need forgiveness for it, under the idea that our general good character absolves and removes it. The moment we are conscious of having committed a sin, we must repent of it, or it lies a dead and killing weight upon the soul, destroying and blighting the forgiveness of our past committed sins. The blessed atonement of the Saviour must be daily be-

fore us ; the fact of His eternal intercession for us must be, and thank God may be, our continual, hourly consolation, through our earthly pilgrimage.

Thus the intercession of Christ is a continual power procuring our *pardon*.

The intercession of Christ is the means of our prayers reaching the ears of the Father. No prayer could pass straight from the mouth of a sinful being to the ear of an all-holy God, who is justly offended with our sinfulness. The Son Jesus Christ, the Friend of the sinner, who knows our case and pities our infirmities, who has the full power to approach the Father, as being His only-begotten Son, and Himself one with the Father, and has at the same time full will to permit man to approach Him, as having borne man's nature and become the Son of man ; He, I say, receives the sinner's prayer, and presents it to the Father. Save through Him, no prayers could reach the ear of God ; they would return powerless and without effect to our own bosom ; but now they have continual efficacy through the intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If, then, every prayer we offer to God passes through the Saviour, how cautious should we be in praying to ask for nothing "to consume upon our

lusts," lest we pray without thought or reverence, lest we pray for what may but gratify anger and jealous feeling towards another; lest we pray in a discontented spirit, or ask for what we plainly see it is not God's will to grant us; lest we pray without confessing our sins, or with the statement that we are "not as other men." I say, how terrible to offer a prayer of sin to God, when every petition is to pass through the mouth of Christ, and is to be offered and presented through Him. How can we expect that prayer to be answered concerning whose motives we have the least doubt. How can men dare to offer as they do, petitions which would make the Intercession the minister of sin? Thus is the intercession of Christ the power procuring the answer to our prayers.

8. The intercession of Christ gives us time to repent. Repentance on our part is essential to forgiveness on His part. We must have time to repent in; and while year after year the barren fig-tree stretches out its leafless boughs to God, and reminds Him of its dead condition, it is the intercession of Jesus alone which holds back the blow of death, and stays the destroying angel in his journey of destruction. *Did we once serve sin*, and now have we been brought to serve

God? It was the Intercession that saved us from being cut off in our days of sin. *Do we now serve sin*, forgetting God, and breaking His word? It is the Intercession that saves us now from being cut off. *Are we serving God, and hesitating, lax, and inconsistent?* It is the Intercession that spares us till the Christian character be formed in us. *Have we friends who serve not God?* It is the Intercession that spares their lives, that we may plead with them, that they may be turned. It is His Intercession that procures us any respite from the sentence we deserve, and without that, many who will dwell for ever in glory would have spent eternity in the dark realms of punishment. Then let us seize hold of the short time we may have for repentance, and value the blessed intercession of Him without whom the sinner must have every hope shipwrecked. How dreadfully does it add to our guilt to have suffered Him to plead for us, and to have pleaded *in vain*! how dreadful to have thrown away the intercession of so good a God, so merciful a Saviour!

Thus the Intercession is the averting power, keeping off death from us.

ε. The intercession of the Son of God is effectual from His keeping His human Body, where-

by He is continually reminded of our infirmities and difficulties, our weaknesses, pains, and sorrows. He is able to plead with effect, since He can bear witness to our infirmities ; He can weigh with exactness the amount of our difficulties and impediments. Thus the echo of the sufferings of man is constantly heard in heaven, not in complaint, but in intercession : no cry of distress, however faint ; no prayer of destitution, however lowly, but it finds access there through Him who knoweth our infirmities : the widow's tear, the sufferer's pain, the orphan's cry, are felt and pitied there, since He has heard and known them all on earth ; the hard temptation and the keen chastisement are understood by Him who was tempted like as we are, and in all our afflictions was afflicted with us ; every bodily infirmity is understood there ; every honest effort, however poor in execution, is valued and rewarded there. He knows the soreness of our daily temptations, and feeling for us the depths of infinite pity and sympathy, prays the Father for us with a power, a love, and efficacy which none but He could do.

Thus is the intercession of Christ a constantly effectual power, from His knowing all our infirmities, and possessing in heaven the Body He

possessed on earth, which shed the tear of human sorrow, and bent beneath the pang of human suffering.

§. His intercession is the power continually gaining for us a supply of grace and power to do His will. Our constant weakness needs His continual grace, which ever proceeds in rich supplies from God the Father, to be afforded us through the Spirit which proceedeth from the Father and the Son. We could do no good thing without that Spirit, we can think no good thought without it; we cannot gain it without prayer, and through the intercession of Jesus Christ our Lord. Thus in the beautiful Collect for the day we pray that "God, from whom all good things do come, may grant to us that by His holy inspiration we may think those things that be good, and by His merciful guidance may perform the same, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Thus is the Intercession a power continually gaining grace for us.

The doctrine of Christ our intercessor is to us a blessed doctrine, assuring us of our continual pardon, the continual acceptance of our prayers, the constant preservation of us from death, the continual remembrance of our infirmities in hea-

ven, and the constant supply of grace. It is the continual application and carrying out of the work of our redemption, and is our great comfort while we feel we are surrounded by so many and so great infirmities.

Let this doctrine encourage the sinner, now so long spared, to approach the God whose love he may have too long left, and may he as a lost son return to his Father, since there is One who pleads for him in heaven.

Let this doctrine cheer the doubting and despairing servant of God, who, wishing to give himself up to do His will, is continually prevented by his inward corruptions, and the attacks of Satan without; for there is One who pleads for him in heaven, and will not suffer him to be tempted above what he is able to bear.

Let this doctrine support the firmer Christian, who, having gained great power in himself, and living above the world, still feels his possibility of falling away; for there continueth one voice in heaven praying for him that his faith fail not.

SERMON XXII.

WHIT-SUNDAY.—THE DRY BONES.

Thus saith the Lord God ; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live—EZEK. xxxvii. 9.

EVERY man lies beneath the hand of a double death, i. e. beneath the heavy weight of two causes, both producing death if not arrested ; he is like a man condemned to die by the laws, and at the same time dying naturally of a disease raging within his body and constitution : if the man is forgiven by the laws, he needs a cure ; if he is cured, he needs pardon, or dies equally.

Every sinner in the world stands to God exactly in this way : he has sinned, and he must be forgiven ; he will sin, and he must have the power to resist it. Every child born into this world is a sinner, and comes into life condemned to death : that sin must be pardoned, or he dies everlastingly. But suppose the child pardoned for the sins of its parent,—suppose it pardoned for what we call original sin, — will that be

enough? No: he is born with a bad tendency, which will lead him on to sin again more and more, which will go on sending up evil thoughts, and so day by day will undo the work of pardon; and so, before a day has gone by, make him a condemned sinner, again condemned to die. What shall stay the progress of this double death? what shall check the inward principle of death working with us? *The Holy Spirit of God.* He alone can do it; He is the "Lord and Giver of life;" He puts into our hearts holy thoughts, and makes soft the heart of stone; He gives men new hearts, and works in them a holy principle of life, and strength, and holiness.

And who shall deliver man from the sentence of death, from sin past? *The Lord Jesus Christ,* by His blood shed upon the cross, procures and grants pardon continually for our sins daily committed. Then as in every sinner there are two causes working death, and endangering his soul's salvation—his past sins and his inclinations to go on sinning,—so are there two causes constantly at work, obviating these two destroying causes—God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; the one redeeming us, the other sanctifying us; the one releasing us from the effect of sin, and the other working in us the desire to be released,

and urging us to ask forgiveness. Thus are the two Persons of the ever-blessed Trinity constantly at work for our salvation—the one leading us to desire and to seek pardon, and the other granting pardon when it is asked; the one healing the disease, the other fulfilling the broken law. So are we prisoners set free, and restored at the same time to the perfect possession of our powers of spiritual life.

It is my desire to dwell particularly on the power of the Holy Spirit of God, and His work. Of the truth and importance of this subject let me intreat you to be fully aware. Men hold very different opinions on this subject: some see no need of a spiritual alteration at all in their hearts and interests, and think the very talking of such things is strange and extravagant. We do not talk of things which should be strange to any one who is acquainted with the Bible; from it is the direction,—“Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” Whatever treatment these doctrines may have met with from some men, or the world in general, they are written plainly and repeatedly in the

word of God; and if any man feel inclined to despise the doctrine of the necessity of an entire change worked in his heart by God's Holy Spirit, let him see whether, in rejecting this, he is not fighting against God. I may address some, too, who, feeling the necessity of this entire alteration, think that they, at least, have got it, and that these words are not needed for them; that others require them, while they are secure. I do not question the fact of such persons being thus influenced by the Holy Spirit of God, but I would caution them of the danger there is in looking out of ourselves at others; in sitting down in quiet self-complacency, and, while we pretend or fancy we feel an interest in others, not being really safe ourselves.

Let us examine the force of the text on this subject.

1. In the days of the prophet Ezekiel, the Jews were captives in a strange land, and their own land was in the hand of strangers. They were suffering punishment for their rebellion; Ezekiel was sent by God to rebuke them sharply, and to comfort those who were penitent among them with promises of a return. The thirty-sixth chapter closes a beautiful series of consoling observations. It opens with an address

to the land in which the Lord declares His jealousy for His chosen habitation, and His fury against the people who had spoiled it. Then follows an address to the people, in which the gift of the Holy Spirit is promised; then the promise of a return.

Such was the voice of consolation which burst from the lips of the prophet Ezekiel, the commissioned minister of God in the case of the captive hundreds of Israel who lay scattered in the dungeons and prisons of Babylon; such the bright vision which God raised before their eyes of a return to their own land amid the hills, and the full enjoyment, once again, each man of his fig-tree and his own vineyard. But how shall these things be? Their hope was lost and cut off, like a withered branch. How could they ever again become a nation, and be as they were in days gone by? They felt weak and powerless in the land of their captivity. "*Oh no,*" thought they, "*our hope is lost for ever!*" To meet their desponding state, God raised a vision before the prophet's eyes: He carried him into a deep valley, full of bones. This was a picture of the ruined and shattered hopes of Israel being again revived, not by their own power, but—"I will raise them up, saith the Lord of Hosts; I will

lay sinews upon them, and cover them with skin."

Such is the first intention of this parable, which was wonderfully fulfilled in the history of the Jews afterwards. It doubtless also refers to the restoration of the Jews to their own land before the end of the world, and the raising up of the bones and bodies of the dead at the last day. Such is the history of the text.

2. We may apply it to the lost condition of man in the dark captivity of sin, and his being raised from this to the glorious liberty of the children of God, and the habitation of the holy mountains of the *spiritual Israel*. The word of God declares to us plainly that we are by nature in a state of spiritual death, that we are without God in the world; and because nothing but the enjoyment of the presence of God deserves the name of life in an immortal creature, we are dead while we live. Man is a fallen creature, ruined by disobedience to God. This ruin took place in the person of the first man, and has involved all his posterity:—"By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." We are all sinners, "con-

ceived in sin," "born in sin," growing up in sin, often dying in sin, and always to the last moment having a sinful heart, struggling with a better nature. I do not say that a man has no right feeling by nature; he has many high principles of conduct, many inclinations to be moral, and often a great aversion to what is immoral. But this does not proclaim him to be possessed of spiritual life; there is much more required: a man by nature does not feel himself to be out of God's favour till the Holy Spirit teaches him; he does not know what sin is, nor feel the great breath of the law of God against which he transgresses; he does not feel his condemnation as a sinner, nor has he the power, if he did feel it, to rise out of it into a state of holiness and spiritual life. Thus he is like the dead bones in the valley, neither possessing life nor conscious of death; dead, and knew not that they were dead; without life, and not desiring to have life. Such is man by nature with respect to real religion. I ask you, Is it not so? are not men by nature satisfied with their own state? do they not think a few forms of religion will be enough? do they not excuse all their sins on the ground of their being hard to resist, and argue that God cannot punish for things to which He has given us by

nature an inclination? Is there not a natural aversion in men to spiritual religion, to religious occupation, and religious conversation? Surely there is. And can even those men think that they are borne out in their opinions by the Word of God? *Impossible*. Do they not there find that a far holier life is required, that God will punish for every unpardoned sin, and that no excuse will be taken for not having forsaken all and followed Christ? And yet men do not act, and will not act, as if this were true, until the Spirit of God has made a change in their heart, and views, and inclinations, and interests. Why is this? It is because men are dead in sins; they are as the dry bones in the valley. Why does not the corpse in yonder churchyard feel the worm that crawls over its cold clay? Because it is dead, and without life. So is it *that man by nature knows not God*.

So far, then, are men like the children of Israel in Babylon. But there is this difference,—they desired pardon, and man by nature *does not*. They were rather in the position of the scattered bones brought together again, but having no life in them, no power to move, and scarcely a desire.

Now to bring the sinner into exactly this posi-

tion, there must one step have been taken beyond the state of a sinful nature,—*conviction of sin*. This brings sinners into the situation of the Jews—desiring, but unable to go; and the bones collected, but unable to move or breathe.

3. Conviction of sin is the first step towards the approach of the sinner to God. He is struck with the wretched consequences of sin, sees that it is and must be ruinous, in this world and in the world to come; he feels unhappy in his solitary moments, and shuns with dread the examination of himself; or he is sick and ill, and sees death approaching, and feels that he dare not die; or he reads the Bible, and finds by that that he is not reconciled to God, and he is terrified at his state; he is conscious of his sin, but what shall he do?

Now what has worked this conviction of sin in him? Is it his own nature that has made him fear sin? No; by nature he sees no harm in sin; he lives in it and loves it. It is the Spirit of God that has convicted him of the dreadful consequences of sin, convinced him that he is a sinner, and convinced him that “the wages of sin is *death*.” Here is the stirring among the bones; here is the chained captive convinced of his mis-

erable captivity, and finding the **dungeon** of the conqueror an abode of misery and **darkness**.

What is the next step?

The captive desires to return home ; he longs for the land of his birth, as much as he **hates** the land of his captivity. So the sinner : **from** hating sin he comes to love and desire **holiness** ; he longs to be free from the dominion of **sin**, that he may serve God freely and fully. **This** desire for holiness is the second step in the sinner's condition, and this is created and raised by the Holy Spirit of grace. If a man does not go on from the conviction of sin to a desire for **holiness**, it is no genuine alteration by the Spirit in His breast. It is one thing to fear the punishment of sin, and even to have hatred for its more loathsome qualities ; it is another to desire to subject our whole heart and soul to the law of God, and to follow Christ. It is one thing to hate ourselves for bearing malice and angry feeling towards another for an injury ; it is another to go forward and heartily offer or beg forgiveness. It is one thing to tremble at the past on a death-bed ; it is another, when life has returned, to go and do so *no more*. It is one thing to see and feel the nature of a life of sin ; it is another to feel the mind and the will to subdue every

rising passion, and inclination to the law of God. This is the work of the Holy Spirit.

4. There is yet a fourth state. The man desires holiness, but how shall he reach it? Can he lay hold on the power to be holy? He feels it is the better part, but how shall he become holy? The Spirit has worked in him "*to will*," but how shall he "*do*, of God's good pleasure?" There is yet a fourth work, then, remaining to be done by the Spirit of God, which man cannot do of himself. The sick man lay at the pool of Bethesda, and saw the troubled water, and the angel of health come and go: there was the full offer of a cure, and he had the full desire to be cured. But his body was sick and weak with eight-and-thirty years' infirmity,—how should he reach the water's edge? There is no one to put him in, and he cannot go down himself. This is the case of the sinner in the stage in which I have described him.

Or a sick man lies dying; he is delirious, and bereft of his reason for awhile. By the power of art that reason is restored; but the restoring of his reason has but created a strong desire for health, and to return to his accustomed labour. He gets well, and works as before; and the same power which has made him desire for

health must be used to give him health and power. He could not feel his condition at all until some strength out of himself had restored his reason and senses. He cannot now put his wishes into execution until he has received an additional energy.

What gives this additional power to the sinner, not only to *will*, but also to *do*? The Holy Spirit of God; *He* is the Lord and Giver of life; He guides us into all truth, and while He guides, gives us the power to walk where He guides us.

This is the proclamation of Ezekiel to the Jews at Babylon, telling them they may return to their native land, and giving them the power to do so. This is the life breathed into the bodies after the bones have been gathered together, and enabling them to walk, and move, and act, as other bodies. Every good feeling we have is the gift of the Holy Spirit; every power we have to resist temptation is the gift of the same Spirit; every check of conscience, every passing thought of good, every apparent accident which turned us out of harm's way, is the same Spirit working for us, shielding us from harm, guarding us, as it were, with outstretched wings to save us, and giving us a power and a continual will throughout our earthly course, to live near to God, and

to persevere in shunning and hating sin. This Spirit, and this Spirit *alone*, can raise the sinner to this condition of life and vigour. There is nothing in a man by nature which can, by working in him, give him the power to do God's holy will, except this Spirit which God graciously and undeservedly bestows upon us.

SERMON XXIII.

THE THOUGHTS AND LESSONS OF ALL SAINTS.

And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God : and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed : and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand.—REV. vii. 2—5.

WE have passed on through the year of holy things to the last saints'-day of the Church. St. Andrew's was the first. It calls us to think how we have profited by all we have heard in the year that has gone—the year of holy-days. Has Lent chastened our spirits? has Good-Friday brought us nearer to the cross? has Easter raised our affections? has Ascension-time raised our hopes? We know not, any year, what may happen between St. Andrew's and All Saints' Day. Come what will, let us at least be found watching when our Lord does come. He has sent His messenger before His face; He has

sent His servants into the vineyard to demand the fruit.

The last day we keep is All Saints', when we thank God for all the saints departed this life, freed from sin and sorrow; when we think of the glorious host who sing eternal praises to God in heaven; when we remember the holy examples of saints of the elder world, and the apostles and Christians of Christ's own Church,—the faith of Abraham, the meekness of Moses, the courage of Samuel, the unworldliness of Elijah, the holiness of David, the patience of Job, the chastity of Jacob, and the family love of Joseph: stars are they, differing from each other in glory, shining out over the dark distance of the world on which they look back.

And the night passed away, and morning dawned, and though the light of that morning was shed from Jesus, the rising Sun, in which the stars could not appear so brightly by reason of the greater glory,—still we love to think now on the warmth of St. Peter, the love of St. John, the brotherly affection of St. Andrew, the martyrdom of St. James and Stephen, the earnestness of St. Paul, the purity of Timothy, and the zeal of the ministers of the early Church. Such we think of on All Saints' Day, and holy are the

lessons they teach us too. Nor forget we the martyrs who died for Jesus' sake, the hard lives of the first Christians, the severe struggles for truth in Christ's Church, the oneness of that Church down to our own time. So on All Saints' Day we think of the saints gone by.

And again, are there no other saints we think of then? Surely there are ;—those who have died and gone from our own home and hearth, the good of our household, the quiet departed, whose holy life and patient sickness, whose humble trust in Jesus Christ, makes us hope that they are with Him in glory,—of these we think on All Saints' Day. Some who were with us that day years back, are now, please God, in glory. We strive to follow them, we look for the day of meeting them again; and if for a moment the tears do start to our eye, we remember, if they gave us any reason, that they are happy, and the tear is stayed. The saints of our own home and family—God rest them where they are: they are not forgotten on All Saints' Day.

Then, too, on that day we have a thought of ourselves,—shall we be one of that glorious company when we die? are we so living as to hope, through Jesus Christ, to be one of all the saints?

Then, too, we think of Him, the King of saints,

their Saviour, their Life, their example, led by the dropping of whose precious Blood, His saints track their way to heaven.

Many, many are the thoughts that come crowding in on All Saints' Day. How little the world seems then ; how light our trials, how petty our disputes and quarrels ; we are raised so far above them all : the departed are again one of us ; we feel ourselves really one of Christ's Church, one of a company not of this world ; we know heaven is our home, we know that we are members of Christ and children of God, and we cannot mix ourselves up with this lower world on which we dwell ; we look on, we look up to the glorious company of whom we hope some day to be one ; we cast our eyes over the churchyard graves, and think who of those are among the saints : when my dust lies there, will my spirit be with them ? We should soon lose ourselves in the many thoughts of that day, the thought gets too dazzling for us ; it is like looking at the night's million stars till we can see no order in the brilliant host ; yet there is an order, though we see it not.

And now let us take the more particular lessons of this holy subject.

1. In the text, the angel is sent forth to seal

God's people in their foreheads ; and before he did it he held back the four angels who were sent out to hurt the earth. He cried, " Hurt not the earth till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." This reminds us of the care of God for His people, as in Lot's case, when God says He would not destroy the wicked till Lot was gone. Again : of the tares being let grow till the harvest of the wheat. And St. John says, " I heard the number of them which were sealed." This reminds us of our own baptismal seal, which stands still upon our brow, the cross of holy water, and of the angel who will respect it in the judgment-day. We know not yet whether that cross, which faded away a few moments after it was traced upon our brow, is still seen by God and His holy angels ; we know not whether, at the coming out of the last angel, it will be to us liquid fire, burning us for neglected, unfulfilled baptismal vows, or whether it will be as the water of the river of life.

The sealing of course refers to the placing the people of God in a state of preparation for going to heaven at the last day, the marking them who have lived holy lives, and feel all their trust in Jesus Christ. The work itself is to us a mystery ; of course the number, a hundred and forty-four

thousand, is mystical. It will be an awful day, the day of the last decision. God grant we may be of the number sealed.

2. Let us see what are the lessons we learn from contemplating the saints, what will be the things in them which will gain for them the angel's last seal: where they will be then, where exactly they are now, we do not know; we believe they are at rest, though not in perfect glory; they wait for us, "that they without us should not be made perfect." Why are they saints? how have they a hope of glory? why will they be sealed at last? what are our first thoughts when we think of the saints?

a. Surely, first, their thought is Jesus Christ. He alone has made them saints,—they are His saints; blessed and holy is He, the King of saints. 'To Him they were given when baptized; Him they thought of and obeyed on earth; Him they approached in prayer, in communion, in church; Him they rose with from the grave, Him for ever and ever they sing praises to in glory: "To Him cherubin and seraphin continually do cry; the glorious company of the apostles praise Him; the goodly fellowship of the prophets praise Him; the noble army of martyrs praise Him; the holy Church throughout all the

world doth acknowledge Him, the honourable, true, and only Son, the everlasting Son of the Father, who took upon Him to deliver man, who did not abhor the Virgin's womb, who overcame the sharpness of death, who opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers, who sits at the right hand of God, with the glory of the Father, who we believe will come to be our Judge." Blessed and holy is Thy Name, Thou King of saints. Through Jesus Christ they have gone to heaven; through Jesus Christ you must go there too. There is no other way. One of these very saints said once to Him, "We know not the way." To Him He answered,—“I am the way. No man cometh unto the Father but by Me;” “Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out;” “Come unto Me, and I will give you rest.”

They were sinners by birth, from Abel downwards,—so are you; and for their original sin Christ only has borne the punishment, and Christ alone can wash away the stain.

They were sinners by action all through their holy lives;—Moses' vainglory, David's lusts, Peter's denial. Christ must pardon their actual sins, and Christ must pardon yours.

They were weak and infirm often, when the

Spirit was willing ; so, too, are you, while you would serve God better. They were strengthened by grace ; so, too, must you be.

They repented, and turned in sorrow to Jesus ; so, too, must you, and He will freely, abundantly pardon. Have you turned to Him ? are you continually looking to Him, as to the only Saviour from sin ? Oh never will you, any more than they did, reach heaven except through His most precious Blood ! Through faith in His Blood is remission of sins. The first thing we think of when we remember the saints is that they were redeemed by Him.

β. Our second thought, perhaps, is their “ much tribulation.” “ Through much tribulation they entered into the kingdom of heaven ;” their night of sorrow went before their day of glory ; their way of toil has gone before their crown of reward. Is there one saint of God whose life is mentioned without his trial too ? His first saint passed through blood to heaven, slain by a brother’s hand ; Abraham gave up all earthly possessions, all human ties ; Isaac’s old age was darkened by his sons’ disputes ; how nearly were Jacob’s gray hairs brought down with sorrow to the grave ; Moses saw not the land of promise, to which through years of toil he had travelled ;

Samuel's sons served not God in his old age ; David's last years were torn with his son's rebellion and his kingdom's tears ; Elijah was tired of life, and would fain have stretched himself out in the desert to die. And need I mention the persecutions and cruel deaths of many of the prophets ? " They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword : they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins ; being destitute, afflicted, tormented ; (of whom the world was not worthy :) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." Daniel in the lions' den, the three children in the furnace. And going onward we find John the Baptist, living far from his home and dying in the prison ; the apostles all, save one, martyrs ; the first deacon of the Church the Church's first martyr. We pass on through the history of all the saints, and we find, in the case of every one, that " through much tribulation they entered the kingdom of heaven." God loving them, chastened them.

So if we would be of this holy company, we must be chastened too ; from which we gather many particular lessons.

1. If we are going through trial or sorrow, this thought should cheer us, for without them

we should never reach the land where sorrow is unknown. The Captain of our salvation was made perfect through suffering; the saints that stand around the throne have passed through the same: shall not we?

“An heir of glory without grief and pain!
O vision false and vain!”

They bear, could we see them, their mark of suffering now. Is there not in heaven that Body in whose hands and feet are the marks of the nails? Is not the scar of suffering still on them, though they suffer not now? Then shall we complain? We are but filling up the sufferings of Christ; “we are,” says St. Paul, “His Body,” *going on* with His sufferings. The wound was first inflicted on His Body; He bore the first agony, and the pain goes on in us. If we bear Christ’s cross, Christ’s own pain, shall we flinch? We are one with all His saints, bearing this pain; we are part of the great whole, all sufferers, suffering in one tie of membership—our mark of belonging to Him.

2. Then, again, we see that all His saints, or well-nigh all, suffered in their families: some far more high and independent minds, like Elijah, had a different sort of trial; but Abraham’s, Isaac’s, Jacob’s, David’s, were all trials in their home

and hearth relations—that is, in the enjoyments of life which in themselves are most innocent, most pure, most holy; yet there God chastened them, because there it was most likely His servants would prove worldly. *There*, perhaps, you suffer; comfort yourself—you are one with the saints. Some might be inclined to say, I have given up the world and great sins, I may at least cling to my family. If we do so one degree too much, there will be our trial.

3. Again, you observe the chastisements of the saints were generally to correct some fault, to chastise for some weakness of character: Jacob loved Joseph too well, so he lost him, and, as he thought, Benjamin too; David sinned, and Nathan gave him his punishment from God; Moses' vainglory kept him out of Canaan,—without his chastisement, his vainglory might have kept him out of heaven too. When you are chastened, see what fault there might be in you needing chastisement, what duty neglected, what fault, what inconsistency, what imperfection wilfully indulged. Never think that a trial comes for nothing, and do not get into the general way of thinking, I am tried because I love God, and God is chastening me, but learn some particular lesson of practice from your particular trial.

4. Again, you see how suited to their peculiar character and circumstances each saint's trial was : Jacob's was a family sin, and his trial was in his family,—he loved a son too much, and he lost a son. Be sure, though you see it not now, that your trials are equally suited to your case ; so do not complain at your chastisement, or imagine that any other would have done half so well. God knows best ; we know nothing.

So we contemplate the saints in light ; so we learn to be like them : they were sufferers, so, thank God, are we ; through suffering they followed Jesus, so would we ; through suffering they gained their crown of glory, oh so may we,—God grant it ! We will not, then, complain ; only let God make us His own, only may we be one of His saints, and all we are content to bear : —“ Not my will, but Thine be done.”

7. Again, we think of the saints, and we think of their holy lives,—how loosely they sat from the world, how raised above it ; and we would try, by God's help, to be and do the same. Through trouble, by His help, they were cleansed from each unholy affection, and raised above each earth-born thought. So, too, would we. They by degrees were “ stablished, strengthened, settled.” How different Jacob's resignation and

unworldliness in the land of Goshen, to *Jacob* travelling home from Laban's dwelling; how different the tone of St. Peter's Epistle and St. Peter after the resurrection to St. Peter before the crucifixion. Are we advancing in this life? do trials make us holier? are we gradually producing the "fruit of the Spirit?" do we increase in holiness? The saints were holy by God's grace; they *are* holy now: let us also be "holy in all manner of conversation." If we would be, if we are, one of that blessed company, let us strive more and more against our petty quarrels, our discontents, our worldly cares: we must be spiritual in our views of things; there *must* be a wide difference between our lives and the lives of the world's servants, or we must doubt if we are one of God's saints.

Is it so with you?

But we think of them: happy are we if among them we may think of some of our own family, our own departed friends. If so, forget them not; live not, think not, reckon not as if they were not still of you. Live more like them. Let each saint's-day of the Church, each birthday, each death-day of those who have gone from you, recall them to your minds; their holy lives, their patient, happy deaths, if such they were; each

churchyard where in silence their dust reposes, each passing funeral, each time we pray for the militant Church ; when we pray for those who have departed this life in God's faith and fear, let each and all of these raise our souls to all the saints of God, so that when the angel comes down to seal the holy, when the graves yield up the dust of God's own people, when Jesus shall come with ten thousand of His saints, we shall be prepared to go back with Him, and stand with the blessed company who "cease not day nor night crying, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever."

SERMON XXIV.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST.
NOTHING CAN SEPARATE US.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?—ROM. viii. 35.

THE love which first sent the Son of God from the world of light and glory, which made Him bear the trembling infant's form, which bore Him up through years of persecution and reviling, and unkindness, and ingratitude, which carried Him through that dark night in Gethsemane, which sustained Him on the painful cross, which sent Him down to hell, which now leads Him continually, day and night, for ever to pray for us in heaven: shall anything in this world be able to quench that love? "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"

1. When the holy apostles and martyrs died; when they had spent their short troubled life in doing good, and preaching to a lost world the Gospel of Jesus Christ; then, when they were taken from their solitary, lonely prison, in the

cold cell where they lay alone, hated by men, forsaken by their own kindred, and deserted by all ; when they were brought out from prison *to die*, and thousands sat around to see them torn in pieces by the wild beasts, or consumed limb by limb by the devouring fire ; when in agony they breathed their last, did death separate them from the love of Christ ? did they not through the gate of death pass to the very throne where Jesus sat ? did not His love and glory shine on them as they died ? Yes, “ I am persuaded that death shall not be able to separate us from the love of Christ.”

Or when *now* the Christian dies, he who by the love of Christ has borne afflictions patiently, has subdued a bad heart, has been able to live above the world, has borne the cross and despised the shame for the love to Christ, who has borne that cross before him ; when he dies, and his tired spirit leaves its home of clay, and we no longer see the working of the love of Christ in His servant who has just left us ; then does death separate him from the love of Christ ? does it not release him to the full enjoyment of a love no words can describe ?—“ I am persuaded that death shall not be able to separate us from the love of Christ.”

2. When we are living in a wicked world, surrounded by the ungodly and sinful, and feel our own short-comings, our own constant inclination to become one with the world, in its ways and habits, when it knows nothing of the God we serve and the world we live for, and looks with hatred or contempt on our efforts to do our duty ; *then*, when we sometimes long to die and be with Christ, He bids us live a while longer here, to bear His will a little longer ; then can having to live in a wicked world separate us from the love of Christ ? can life separate us from the love of Christ ? can He not manifest Himself unto us, and not unto the world ? “ I am persuaded that life shall not be able to separate us from the love of Christ.”

3. When Satan was once an angel, and being sinful was driven out of heaven and became a devil ; when from that time he envied and hated man, and plotted and planned his ruin, and to do this hated above all things Jesus Christ, who came to die for our salvation ; when he entered into Judas, persuading him to betray his Master ; when he urged against Him the malice and cruelty of wicked men, and now he goeth about night and day, striving to separate us from the love of Christ, striving to ruin weak, trusting

souls ;—shall the fallen angel separate us from the love of Christ ? shall the wolf separate the sheep from the Shepherd ? will he not rather drive him closer to the Shepherd's bosom ? “ I am persuaded that angels shall not be able to separate us from the love of Christ.”

4. When King Herod threw St. Peter into prison, intending on the morrow to bring him forth to die ; when the same king killed James with the sword ; when another King ordered St. John the Baptist to be killed in prison ; when princes of Rome and the other nations led out the Christians like sheep to the slaughter ; when another Herod tried to murder Christ amid the babes of Bethlehem ; or when Pilate the governor condemned Jesus to die ; did all these princes and governors separate them they killed and persecuted from the love of Christ ? did they separate us from His love when He was bent on dying for us ? “ I am persuaded that principalities and powers shall not be able to separate us from the love of Christ.”

5. We are now weak and sinful ; we would be better than we are ; we would love God, and yet we are so soon drawn aside. We fear this present evil world. Yet if we love Christ shall “ things present” separate us from His love ? I am persuaded not.

6. Or when we look onwards to years to come, and see how much we may yet go through; when we think how some have fallen; when we remember the agony of dying, the last struggle of Satan for our passing souls; the dreadful wrath of the judgment morning, the book of sins, and the angry Judge; then, when we fear things to come, shall they separate us from the love of Christ? In temptation, is not His grace sufficient? in death, will not His staff comfort us? in judgment, will not His voice justify us? "I am persuaded that neither things present nor things to come shall be able to separate us from the love of Christ."

7. There are in heaven glorious creatures who have never sinned, who fold their shining wings before His throne, who fly about ever doing His pleasure,—angels and seraphs, and the spirits of just men made perfect. But amid them all does He forget the meanest, weakest, poorest creature here below? among all the hosts of heaven does He forget one saint on earth?

8. There are in hell thousands of evil beings who love to ruin men, and to bring them to destruction, by carrying them away from Christ. But shall they succeed? "I am persuaded that neither height nor depth," neither angels above nor

devils below, "shall be able to separate us from the love of Christ." "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation?" Does not trouble rather drive us to His bosom? "Or distress?" Does not want here make us seek plenty in heaven? "Or persecution?" When men laugh at us and revile us do we not rather glory that we are thought worthy to suffer for Christ's sake? "Or nakedness?" When naked from the world do we not the more look to be clothed upon from heaven? "Or famine?" When we hunger here do we not rather seek to be where we shall "hunger no more, neither thirst any more?" "Or peril?" Does not continual fear here lead us to Him whose perfect love casteth out fear? "Or sword?" Did not a death of violence release the spirit straight to Christ? "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." These very things drive us to the

very bosom of Christ ; they do not, cannot, never shall, separate us from His love.

Such is the general view which is given us of the love of Christ, warring with and overcoming the opposition of the world, the flesh, and the devil. It is the history of the Church of Christ in every age, the history of the Bible, and the secret cause, unseen by the world, of the Christian's conquest.

Now there are many things to examine in this history here given us of the love of Christ.

a. First, we should see what it is : it is that feeling towards us men which the Son of God had when He saw us lost for ever, and He pitying us offered Himself to die in our stead, and bear the whole weight of God's anger ; and He did bear it when He died. What that love is, what caused it, is a mystery ; it is past our understanding.

There are two things especially to remember regarding that love : first, it was shewn towards the whole world ; He loved and died for every one, rich and poor, scholar and no scholar, Jew and Gentile, men then, and men now, and men to come ; He died for all men. And secondly, He died for and loved *each one person* ; so that if there had been but one sinner in the world,

and that sinner had been one of you I now address, He would have died for you. Each one person's soul has called forth His love and required His death : so that each one may take comfort in thinking of Christ's love being such to him as to make Him give His life for him.

Such is His love to us.

β. Then the next truth we are led here to see is, that if He has so loved us, He will still do for us all that we desire Him which is for our good : “ How shall He not with Him freely give us all things ? ”

Now this is added for our comfort and encouragement, His love has made Him die for each one among us, so He will consider us in each particular request.

I speak to some who are but beginning to turn to God, who look back on a life already spent in many sins, and feel that their sins have been committed against the clearest light and convictions, who feel therefore they have no reason to hope for His mercy. If you are now anxious to turn, to you this word is addressed : if He so loved you as to die for you alone, how shall He not with His life freely give you pardon, if now you desire to turn to Him ?

γ. I speak to some who have particular tempta-

tions to particular sins, whose one earnest desire is to overcome that temptation. If Christ has considered you a sufficient object for the giving up of His life, shall He not with that freely give you grace sufficient for your temptation?

Others, again, though trying to serve Him with sincerity and penitence, yet dread at the day of judgment their many sins of ignorance and infirmities into which they have been led, lest they should condemn them. If He so loved you as to die for you, shall He not with His life freely give you pardon for those very sins of infirmity which in your sorrow you regret?

The fact of His love, which has been already shewn by His dying for you *alone*, is your encouragement and comfort in approaching Him now, giving you reason to hope with sure trust for His now answering your prayers, and giving you what you desire.

And the same reason I would use to you who have not yet at all sought God, who are now living in sin, and far from Him. If the Lord Jesus Christ has been willing to die for you, if He now intercedes for you in heaven, why will you not turn to Him who has done so much for you, and who so freely offers you a happiness and peace the world which you serve can never give?

γ. Then the third point we find with respect to His love is the power of our being separated from it. Christ has died for us, therein He loved us; having died for us, will He not now help us? Surely, without doubt. But though His love is great, are there not many things which may divide us from it, which may prevent our finally benefiting by His love and death? Now here St. Paul speaks to one who might mistake about religion, not rightly understanding it, as many in that early day of Christianity might have done, and many still do now.

When a man sees the trials and difficulties of a Christian's life, he might think those troubles were a sign God had forgotten him; or when he looked forward to being persecuted for Christ's sake, he might shrink from the work of bearing the cross, fearing lest he might at last fail, and through much opposition from the wicked be separated from Christ. But we are told that none of those things which seem to take us from Christ really do so, but rather those very things which seem to be against us are for us: "Nay," i.e. so far from being hindrances, "in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him who hath loved us." These very things are the means of making us conquerors over sin, and

bringing us to Christ; the very seeming hindrances help us. Such is the nature of Christ's kingdom; everything is for us if we love God. "All things work together for good to them that love God." Chastisement is a sign of His love, for "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth;" persecution is, because He told us if we loved Him the world would hate us; the unkindness of men separates us more from them, and fixes us on Christ. If men kill us, or if we die, death, seeming to be a failing of all our power *here* of reliance on Christ, becomes but the door of everlasting life. So all these things, which to the eye of the world drive us from Him, really serve to increase His love to us and ours to Him. They make us conquerors: "It is Christ who loved us."

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